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'IT'S A GREAT WAR!'



MARY LEE



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STOCKWELL HALL



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'IT'S A GREAT WAR!'

BY

MARY LEE



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
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1929

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

TO MY

MOTHER

WHO MADE IT ALL POSSIBLE

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

To my friend, Baroness Eva von Blomberg; to my sister, Simone Lee; and to my friend, Elizabeth Andrews Bronson, my thanks are due for their help in the preparation of this manuscript.

M. L.

WESTPORT, NEW YORK
June 30, 1929

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PREFACE

A BOOK with the war as a background cannot be a short book. For those who are in it, War is interminably long, and only a long book can create the impression of interminable length. Those who lived through the war in Europe have lived two lifetimes: one the lifetime in France; the other, that connected existence which took place before they went and resumed its pace after they came home. A book about War cannot move smoothly, swiftly. War moves in jerks. Jerks which consist in moments of intense excitement punctuated by hours and weeks and months on end of boredom. A book which would picture War faithfully must not fail to give that alternating sense, first that living has become more real, more vivid, and then that the whole pace of life has been made suddenly sluggish and dull. Nine tenths of War is Waiting. A book which eliminates the waiting, eliminates nine tenths of what the people who go to War live through.

A book about War cannot be a romance built about an organized and neatly thought-out plot. War is not a romance. There may be romances in it, but the Chief Protagonist is always War itself, with its stupidity, its carelessness of human life. The aims, the desires, the emotions of the thousands of separate individuals who make an army are sacrificed in the enormous welter of uncontrolled events. Therefore a novel of the war cannot be a coherent romance, moving logically to a foreseen end. People there were in France who conducted such short, coherent romances, but such people were inevitably sent home. The chief characteristic of War is that human beings are powerless to achieve their ends. War is a Spectacle in which millions of lives are jostled about by mental and moral forces not their own.

There cannot be an organized plot, yet there must be a rhythm swinging through the book which portrays War. There is a certain rhythm about War which penetrates the consciousness of those who live through it, which goes on after it, still singing in their souls. A book which would re-create War, must re-create this Rhythm of wartime life.

A book with the background of war should not be written in war slang, nor use too many of those technical and military terms which were so vivid in the language of the army of the time. War jargon will be unreadable for the generations to come. And it is important that the generations to come should be able to find out about the last war. The parents of the rising generation, perhaps, will not find it easy to explain to their children everything they did.

A book about the war must not stop with the Armistice. For the

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army, the war went on for nearly a year after the Armistice. And the causes for which the members of that army were sent to War, were not settled till two years after that.

Neither must a book about the war deal entirely with soldiers at the front. For every day spent at the front, some three or four days were spent behind the lines. For every man at the front, some seven or eight men were occupied in other sorts of positions at the rear. To tell of the one man at the front alone, is to tell only one eighth of the story of War.

A book about the war may not, perhaps, be written by a man. A man who goes to war, unless he be a member of the high command, sees only one small corner of the army. He sees the Infantry, or the Artillery, or the Air Service, or the Medical Corps,– but he sees little of the whole, great welter of human activity and inactivity which is an expeditionary force. Furthermore, men, during a war fought in a foreign country, are under a constant moral and emotional strain. So great is that strain that they can, perhaps, neither see clearly and impartially events that occur while they are there, nor can they remember them clearly after they return home. Emotion blurs the picture. Emotion sets up complexes which interfere with the intellectual analysis and recollection of events. And it is only when one looks back with a certain intellectual clarity, free from the blurring of emotional enhancement, that one can see through the heterogeneous, chaotic stream of separate events of War toward the Truth.

To be of value to the world, a book which deals with War should be built up of Truth. As long as romances are fabricated about War, it will remain a noble, worthy, beautiful adventure for Youth. As long as War is made romantic, it will go on.

MARY LEE

CHESTNUT HILL, MASSACHUSETTS
April 25, 1929

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'IT'S A GREAT WAR!'

BOOK I

"There never was a good war, or a bad peace."

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

"When shall we comprehend the awful tragedy of military glory, what it costs, and what it's worth?"

ANATOLE FRANCE.

"The end and aim of war is murder; the weapons of war are espionage and treachery and the encouragement of treachery, the ruin of the inhabitants, and pillage and robbery of their possessions for the maintenance of the troops, deception and lies which pass under the name of finesse; the privileges of the military class, the lack of freedom that is discipline, enforced inactivity, ignorance, rudeness, debauchery, drunkenness..."

TOLSTOI.

"How very inconsistent men are, how unreasonable in their conduct. Just look to what an extreme the sentiment of patriotism has brought them. Under the pretext of saving France, they are putting a finish to her. They are killing her children and replacing them with foreigners. Under the pretext of alliance, the country is being opened to them. There are no more Frenchmen, but swarms of Americans. In every French family there is now an American. The son or the husband has lost his life or is risking it, but the unknown foreigner is taking his place. On Sunday you see the American going out with the French family. He takes the children's hands, caresses the mother when she's passable, or the daughter if the mother is too old. Everybody considers it all right and very natural. Is the final consequence of patriotism to kill the natives and throw open the doors to foreigners? A fusion of races is thus being encouraged that no one could have foreseen. The Germans are repopulating the North, the English Normandy, the negroes and Arabs the South, the Americans the rest. Is this the way France is going to be saved?"

ANATOLE FRANCE.

"For a man must go with a woman, which women don't understand —
Or the sort that say they can see it, they aren't the marrying brand."

KIPLING.

"Men won't stand for the truth except when it coincides with their desires."

ANATOLE FRANCE.

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'IT'S A GREAT WAR!'

BOOK I

A SWING hung from the branch of a maple tree. A little boy and a little girl grasped its ropes, pulling their feet up onto the wiggly board. There was barely room on the board for all four feet.

"Mine go outside," said the boy. "Yours go in. I'm a boy." He raised one sneakered foot, and kicked the girl's firm ankle.

"No sir! We'll go every other one. One o' yours outside and one o' mine." The girl gave his bronzed, bare shin a sharp kick. The boy's foot slipped, suddenly, from the board. He gripped the ropes to keep himself from falling. The feet fitted themselves onto the board after the method that the girl had planned.

"Push, lazy!" The boy swung his body out, backwards, down, hanging on his arms, pushing forward with his brown legs. Up, up... The girl swung her body out, backwards, down, fingers grasping the stickly ropes, arms tightening, back stretching, legs pushing upward. The swing rose,– and fell. Rose,– and fell... Up, up,– a gasping place where the world seemed to drop out from under,– and then your stomach, rising as you plunged down... Fear. A little thrill of Fear, each time... That was the fun. If you hadn't felt that, swinging would have been just the same as walking. But now,– Down... Up... The girl's eyes shone as the swing poised a second,– plunged down. The boy stopped pushing. He looked across at the girl's eyes. "Push, lazy,–"

"Kiss me," the boy said, suddenly.

Anne Wentworth's feet slipped from the swing board, dragged along the earth. The loose ends of hemp on the rope scratched her hands. Her feet dragged back and forth, back and forth. The swing board bumped her stomach. She let go the ropes. Thump. Two feet on the firm ground. She turned and ran.

At the corner where Hugh MacDonald's avenue turned into the street, she looked back. Hughie was still standing in the swing, elbows about the ropes, dangling, watching... She trotted off, down the street.

"Ugh!" she said.

This was the first year of the twentieth century, and Anne Wentworth was ten years old.

...

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Peter was the smallest black kitten.

From the beginning, Peter had never had sense. Honora, the barn cat, had had a big family under the back steps. But one day they had all disappeared except two. Mother had told Anne to divide up the two between her and Geoffrey. Geoffrey was eight years old, and Anne was ten, so Geoffrey naturally got the smallest kitten.

They realized that they were lucky to have kittens at all. They knew that Aunt Anna, up at the 'big house' at the end of the long avenue across the river, wouldn't let Rosalind keep a kitten. Patrick, who presided over Uncle Caleb's horses, wouldn't have kittens about the stable either. Both Patrick and Aunt Anna seemed to care more for shininess than kittens. Rosalind had the babies,– Ruth and Sammy,– that was something. But they were always bossed about by Mary Dolan,– kittens were better. Anne and Geoffrey's mother didn't mind kittens. There was lots of room for kittens in their old barn, out where the kitchen garden sloped toward the river,– empty now except for old hay and musty, broken things that people put there. Mother didn't even care if you brought kittens into the house. It was Honora who cared. She came, lashing her tail, her green eyes glaring, picked up the kittens by the soft places on the backs of their necks, and stalked off. For four days, nobody could find the kittens.

...

Then one day they heard Peter mewing. Geoffrey looked right up at the sky, because it was the sky that the sound seemed to come from. Geoffrey always looked straight toward things. Even when Anne and Rosalind and Hugh MacDonald called him foolish,– 'kittens couldn't fly round above you, silly,–' Yet there, up between the barn's eaves and the sky was Peter. He was walking out along the gutter, mewing. Getting to where the land sloped, so the roof grew higher, higher... The highest corner... He couldn't go on, and he couldn't turn round. He sat down, curling his tail around him, crying. The children stood in the kitchen garden, their mouths open, gaping. 'He'll be killed,' said Anne, 'I'll go get Mother.' She ran off, pigtails flapping. Hughie went to find Tim Donovan, the Downham chore man. When something happened, it was always better to go get men... Rosalind put her face down in her two hands. She couldn't even bear to look at Peter... She sobbed, her brown curls jerking. And while she stood there, Geoffrey trotted round the corner of the old barn.

...

Anne ran back, panting, Mother, coming... Mothers ran so slowly... She stopped, in the middle of the garden, her mouth wide open. Up there in the hay window, in the gable of the barn, was Geoffrey. Geoffrey, climbing out onto the narrow gutter. If he should fall,– Geoffrey, jiggling the gutter with his feet to see if it would hold him... Didn't seem to be thinking about all that space between

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the barn roof and the garden. The garden sloping, so that the eaves got higher, higher...

Anne grabbed Rosalind by the shoulder, shook her. 'What did you let him do it for, you boob?' They stood, heads back, mouths open. Geoffrey, edging himself along between the barn roof and the sky there... Steadying himself with just his two fingers on the shingles... Moving one foot an inch, then the other an inch... Each inch taking him to where the eaves were higher... 'Don't say anything!' Mother, whispering, behind them. Mother's hand, pressing on their shoulders... 'We mustn't make him look down...' But Geoffrey's eyes were steady on the gutter. Never once did they leave it.

"He's not going to be able to turn round any more than Peter!" Anne's hoarse whisper. At the highest corner the little cat was yowling. Inch by inch Geoffrey moved toward him. Slowly, carefully, bending forward, clasping Peter... "S-sh!" said Mother. Her finger on her lips, she turned to Hughie and Tim Donovan, who came, panting. Tim Donovan went and stood under the high eaves with his arms up... The way you stood when you were going to catch a football. Up there against the blue sky Geoffrey balanced, clasping the kitten, edging slowly, one foot and then the other, backward. Mother's hand gripped Anne's shoulder till it hurt her. Geoffrey, groping back of him to feel the window... Feeling... Feeling... Touching the jamb... He got it... Crawled through, backward... The children shouted. Funny for Mother to turn round and begin crying... Geoffrey came running round the barn, kissing the kitten.

"I climbed out and got Peter, Mummy," he said. Mother, kneeling, her arms round Geoffrey's shoulders, stroking his hair upward from his forehead:

"I saw you. You were splendid. But you shouldn't have done it you know, darling."

"But Mummy, why not?" Geoffrey's face was solemn. "I was afraid that Peter might fall."

"You might have fallen yourself, old man, might have,– been killed." Her arm, pressing him closer. "Sometimes, when there's no other way, we have to do dangerous things, have to take the chance of falling. But when we *do* risk our lives like that, we must be sure the thing we're risking them for is worth while." She took Geoffrey's hand. They walked toward the house, the others skipping round them. 'Tim could have got the ladder,' Hugh was saying. Geoffrey, perplexed, skipping a little to keep step beside his mother. Suddenly he looked up, smiling:

"But it was worth while, wasn't it Mummy, to save Peter?"

...

Mid-summer, 1914. A taxicab drew up before the Wentworths' white gate, under the heavy hanging branches of the elm trees. From it Anne and Randolph Pendleton threw their bags out. The gravel

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was still damp with the dew of morning. They stood a minute, laughing, arguing about the cab fare. It was vacation, and they had come back on the night boat from Bar Harbor.

Randolph Pendleton was in Geoffrey's class at college. Anne was a senior now, and Geoffrey a sophomore in college. One Sunday, in his freshman year, Geoffrey had come home, bringing a tall, slender youth with dark hair that curled and in his voice the soft drawl of Virginia. The two had met, Geoffrey explained, crossing the Yard one day, and stopped to talk, and then and there decided to live together. Geoffrey who up to that day had refused to 'herd' with people... To Randolph, the friendly comfort of the old house by the river had come to be a haven from the bleakness of the northern college. 'Coming home?' Geoffrey would say on Fridays and Randolph, rumpling his brown curls, would turn and pack his suit case. If he had doubts, they left him when he thought of Geoffrey's mother,– that small, quiet person,– her grey eyes shining on him from her white face, her hair drawn so smooth and straight back from her temples... Patting her sofa by the fire when you came in: 'Now tell me all about what you've been doing...'

Then, there was Rosalind, over across the river in the 'big house.' Rosalind, so slim, so lovely, yet, somehow, so distant. Northern women had never ceased to puzzle Randolph. A strange integrity about them that kept a man at arm's length... Anne, boylike, laughing at you, keeping your brain moving... Never letting your mind rest,– nor your body,– making you walk, ride, paddle,– all the time talking... About ideas, too,– Anne seemed to learn more in college than the boys did... And Mrs. Wentworth, a pale, sweet Madonna. A person who did things for you,– listened when you were lonely, nursed you when you were sick, mended your clothes each week as she did Geoffrey's... A woman entirely unconscious of her beauty ... Not like his mother,– God, he'd kill anyone who said anything against his mother... There were people in the south who,– that was why the judge had made him come up north to college... His mother, the beautiful Margaret Randolph, of Virginia, who'd,– who'd,– well, men were foolish sometimes,– But beauty like hers,–

"Hi!" Anne called to her mother, standing between the tall hollyhocks on the broad step. Anne stopped suddenly in the path and stood there, looking. Her mother's face,– something must have happened... "Father's not sick?" 'No.' Her mother kissed her, patted Randolph's shoulder. 'Come in. Come in.' Josiah, at the breakfast table, reading his paper,– great, black letters,– had father taken to reading,–

"Europe's gone to war!" Josiah laid the paper on the table. 'What?' 'No!' Anne and Randolph reached for it. They had been cruising on Uncle Caleb's boat,– for nearly a week they hadn't seen a paper. They stood, bending over the big, black letters. "England will be in it by tomorrow." Josiah's voice calm, fatal...

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"I can't believe England will go to war!" Mrs. Wentworth's thin, fine face was troubled. Geoffrey...

"She'll have to. She can't let this go on,—" Randolph picked up the paper. Armies invading Belgium... Liège, Brussels,—those gay, secure places that he had used to stay in with his mother... "Everybody'll have to before they get through. We'll be in it ourselves."

Anne stirred her coffee. Life, getting exciting... Adventure, lurking ... War... So it wasn't just a thing you studied about in books,—a historical, unreal thing... While she and Rosalind and Randolph and the others had been lying on the decks and watching the blue sea scud past down east of Schoodic, armies had been marching... Civilized people like themselves out, killing each other... The Incomprehensible, the Impossible, had happened... Life, breaking in two right here... Life, a swing that soared up, and came to a jumping-off place and started down... You were not living if you only swung up...

"Invading France!" Randolph stared at the paper. Paris, God, if you were there, you'd run out, armed with a club or something... Spring, on the Champs-Elysées... The pale leaves of horse-chestnuts, spreading... The Louvre, where he had used to wander while his mother bought herself new clothes... The Beaux-Arts, where he had meant to go and study Art,—until the dream cracked that day at Nice when Margaret Pendleton had laid her lovely, tearful face against his shoulder, and told him the money they had lived on since his father's death was used up... Paris...

"The thing can't last more than two months." Josiah pulled his watch out. Must catch the Eight-Sixteen train, war or no war... "There wouldn't be money enough in the world to keep it going more than two months,—" He hurried into the hall, back to the closet.

"Then I reckon I'll have to go right quick," said Randolph.

"You don't want war, Randolph?" Anne said.

"N-no," drawled Randolph. "But if there's goin' to be a war, I certainly am not goin' to sit at home and miss it." Josiah stopped in the doorway, putting his hat on. Those young ones, looking at one another... Wars were for Youth... They knew it... "At any rate, goin' to war," said Randolph, "would be more fun than earnin' your livin' in an office."

Josiah turned. He hurried down the front path, through the white gate. A day, long long ago... A little boy standing at this same gate... The boy's father, in a long, blue broadcloth coat, trimmed with brass buttons... Carrying a great sword, and bending down to kiss him... Climbing into a carriage and driving off under the elm trees, waving... His mother, sobbing... 'I want to go, too!' Josiah had said, 'I want to go, too!' His mother, her eyes all red from weeping, had looked down at him: 'You are too young...' Too old, this time... Josiah sighed as he walked toward the station. If the country should be drawn in, it would be the young ones who'd go. Geoffrey, and Randolph, John

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McIntyre, Hugh MacDonald,– all these young boys who came to tea on Sundays. They'd know what War was... There was something that eluded you about War... His father, and Thomas Emerson had used to sit, on winter evenings, gazing at the fire... Stories, that broke off, suddenly, in the middle,– eyes that met and then looked swiftly at the women and the children... War,– horrible,– killing people. And yet, 'Remember that night at Richmond,' they'd say, and Josiah, standing behind the old, red curtains, had known that somehow War had been fun. Something about it that you never quite got,– Something you couldn't see until you'd lived it... Like Love, War... You could read about it, but until it had been yours,– Geoffrey, and these young boys, these children, would be going, seeing... While he, Josiah, would still be walking to the Eight-Sixteen each morning... He sighed. Too old... Only senility could keep the Eight-Sixteen from taking him to business...

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BOOK II

"In the longest Peace, man does not speak so much as in the shortest War."
German proverb.

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BOOK II

THE ship's steel prow turned down, into the Hudson River. Along the rail stood rows of men in khaki, women in dark blue. They watched the pier, the gaping doors of its sheds, swinging toward the ship's stern. Last foothold of the land, moving backward, backward... They would have waved, but there was no one on the pier to wave to. An officer of the steamship line, a dock hand,– no one they cared for... And so they watched the empty, black doors of the pier shed, growing smaller.

They walked toward the stern as the ship moved, looking backward. Anne walked among them. Alone... Everyone, everything you cared for, on the shore there, somewhere... Between you and them, dirty water, swirling... The space widening... She edged among the silent people to the stern rail, pressing her breast bone against it, gazing backward. Home... Her mother and Josiah, in the low-ceiled, old, familiar parlor... The firelight, moving in the tooling of the books' backs... Her mother, reading... Anne could see her frail hands turning the pages of the paper, hear the sweet voice: 'Only a tranquil Europe can be a stable Europe. There must not only be a balance of power, but a community of power,–' Mother was always trying to justify the terrible Thing that was descending on her,– 'not organized rivalries, but organized peace...' Her mother would look across the gold rims of her glasses at her father: 'If we follow Wilson, at least we shall be fighting for something that is worth while.' And Josiah, raising his beard from his breast, touching his finger tips together: 'But it was worth while, wasn't it Ellen, to save Belgium?'

Geoffrey... Geoffrey going to Plattsburg. Getting out boots and puttees, a campaign hat with faded blue cord... Tilting it on his forehead at an angle, laughing: 'A hard guy...' His uniform all wrinkly,– Mother had packed it all away in camphor... 'Good Gosh, didn't she know he'd need it?' Maggie pressing, blinking... Tears dripping down and sizzling on the iron... 'Well, anyway, it'll be good to get out of that damned mill,' Geoffrey saying... Geoffrey had been working up through Uncle Caleb's mills since college ended...

Lewis Newman,– why should she think of him now? He had been her instructor in a history course at college, and had fallen in love,– He wanted to marry her. He had told her at last, and she had been suddenly a small girl on a swing, wanting to let her hands slip down the stickly ropes until her feet hit earth, and turn, and run fast. But you couldn't. It was a penalty of being grown up. When men got

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feeling that way, you had to face it. Preposterous, that anyone should think you'd want to marry... The man's hand had trembled,– Thank God that was over.

But his Ideas. You could forget the man, but not his ideas... He was a pacifist, Newman,– one of the people who dared to say that War was foolish. 'In the end you have to settle the thing round a table,'– his eyes would gleam at you through his glasses,– 'why wait till you've maimed a generation before you do it?' Newman himself was going to refuse to go if he were drafted. Have to work on a farm or something,– Anne smiled. He wasn't the kind that took to physical labor,– There had been an afternoon, last spring, on the river,– the current had carried the canoe onto a sunken log, and tipped them over. Newman had swum rapidly for shore and then, remembering, turned back, to help Anne tug the thing ashore and right it. His teeth had chattered. He had been white, and trembly... He had not thought it funny... Geoffrey and Randolph, turning the bend just then, had sat there, laughing... 'Let her see! Let her see!' they'd murmured, 'don't let's help 'em.'

'I bet your friend's a pacifist,' Geoffrey had said that evening... She, rising, 'He thinks that war's ridiculous.' 'So it is,' Geoffrey had laughed, 'any moron could see that at Plattsburg, but,–' 'Your little friend, Anne,'– Randolph's Virginian drawl,– 'seems to be the sort that just naturally would dislike fightin'.' 'Too bad,' said Geoffrey, 'that all the pacifists happen to be people who are yellow,–' 'Did it ever occur to you,' Anne, angry, 'that perhaps it makes you see straight to be yellow?'

Yes, Newman's ideas disturbed her. Her ancestors, he'd pointed out, had been pacifist in the War of 1812,– the India trade had been ruined, they'd lost money... Whereas now,– he'd pointed to Uncle Caleb, his mills going full blast making underwear for soldiers,– now they were jingoes... And Wilson? This 'Concert of Power' idea,– wasn't that just a smoke screen? Wasn't he really, like Roosevelt, like Uncle Caleb, afraid that after this war Germany would come and lick us? Wasn't it just a noble gesture, to make a nation raised on idealism, go in? No! No! Anne felt sure of this. They were starting out to make the world safe... So that this Hideous Thing could never happen again... This was a War to End War,–

"Say, what's those little rafts there?" A nurse, standing next Anne joggled, pointing. A row of tiny rafts were bobbing in the backwash from the steamer.

"The submarine nets of New York Harbor. Well, we're outside 'em!" An officer next Anne, looking backward... Tall buildings of Manhattan drawing nearer together, growing smaller... People watching, silent... People, lonely... The ship's rail began to vibrate, trembling the elbows resting on it. The water widened. Land, going farther, farther... Home, everything you cared for, going, melting...

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The city, poised a moment, a distant, fairy palace in the pink light... Sinking into the grey sea... Home,– everything,– slipping behind you... Slipping...

A gong sounded. Anne turned. Hungry... Strange that you should be hungry... She walked toward the bow. To the east the sea was lowering, dark grey. The nurses' capes, as they flapped back, were lined with scarlet...

...

Night. Black as ink. Anne walked along the deck, peering out into the rushing darkness. She leaned her head across the bulwark, listened. Way below there, somewhere, water rushing... Phosphorescence glimmering in slanting streaks. She walked on. You could see nothing... Each lurch might pitch you into someone coming. It was July of 1917.

She undid the high buttoned collar of her uniform. Uncomfortable, damn thing... Invented by some old dame in Civil War times. Worn today because they'd always worn them... A dress of serge, buttoned from your throat down to the bottom of your long skirt. A little cape that flopped back. The nurses' capes were blue and lined with scarlet, but Anne's was just grey... Tonight they were all grey,– one with the moving darkness... Alone... Hundreds of people,– each one alone... Being rushed forward, into blackness... Anne drew a long breath. Against her face, the salty dampness... Ahead, danger... The Unknown... She strode forward, into the dark. Why, it was fun this...

"I beg your pardon!" A man's soft, thick body, receded as she bumped it. Anne drew back. Faces were white ovals... You could not recognize them... One of the doctors, perhaps... She went and stood by the rail, holding her face up to the breeze. The sea damp stuck in your hair... The man came, and stood next her. "Well, this is better than that waiting round to start, anyhow," he said. "Gad, I couldn't have stood it if we'd waited any longer. Going ashore, seeing your people, saying good-bye... Tearing your heart out, and then finding yourself still in harbor next day. It got worse each time. The last time I said good-bye to my wife, she didn't really expect that I was going. Expects to see me again tomorrow morning. She's, she's, – going to have a child soon."

Anne stood, looking out into the moving darkness. Queer thing for this man to tell her,– she didn't know him. "We were married a year ago," the man went on. "I wasn't good enough for her, but I, – well, I've done fairly well by her so far. She wanted me to sign up for this war. I'd been a regimental surgeon in the Philippines,– I damn well had to. Now, God knows what'll happen."

"Le's go get another drink, Charley." A voice behind them in the darkness. "'Nother drink'll make you feel better. Christ, we may be sunk before another evening. 'Fwe get sunk, another Scotch an' soda'll keep you warm down there..." The voice receded.

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"Some of those Ambulance boys." The man beside Anne looked across his shoulder to the shadows. "Those birds have been in it. They're going back from leave now. They'll be drunk all the way." He leaned his elbows on the rail, tipped his campaign hat. "That's the trouble with this war game. I saw a bit of it in the Philippines. That's why I'm damned scared. If we get near the front,– lots of work, lots doing,– it'll be all right. A man can stand danger. But if we get rotting round the rear,– that's when you begin slipping. Nothing to do, and the morale goes right down,–"

"How do you mean, 'morale'?" asked Anne. Nothing to do? How could there be nothing to do in war?

"It's the way the outfit feels,– morale,– the spirit of the whole bunch. You'll see. When they're near danger, they'll be on the crest of the wave, they'll behave. As soon as they get bored," he tossed his hands up, "they get to treading the primrose path,– that's all." "Oh," said Anne. What was he talking about? How could anyone find a 'primrose path' in war-time? Man must be crazy... "That's why I hated leaving my wife," he went on. "She trusts me. Keeps me,– keeps me,– balanced. She's the fly wheel. Don't trust myself. I know this war game. No matter what great things you think you're going to do when you go in,– you get there, and get rotting round with lots of money, and Hell! Your feet slip out from under you. I hope I'll do the right thing by my wife, but God knows..." He looked out across his clasped hands, into the darkness. Anne shifted. How could you possibly get bored when you were fighting, suffering, taking care of wounded? How could you get 'rotting round with lots of money'?

"Come on Georgie, ole boy, le's have jes' one more... Vive la France!" Two hazy figures lurched past, disappearing in the darkness. 'The Majesty of the human spirit... One can only kneel before the heroism of these young boys,' old Maitland, reading letters from Ambulance boys, back in the English course at college, used to tell them... "Ma-a-ad-er-lon, Mad-er-lon, Mad-er-lon," the lurching figures chanted... Somewhere below, rushing, swashing, streaked with golden phosphorus, moved the ocean...

...

Daytime. A small cabin somewhere in the ship's inside. Typewriters, set on upturned packing boxes. Anne sat on a bench before one, copying orders. The cabin, all the typewriters, all the papers, moving in slow circles... As if it were suspended somewhere in space, tied to nothing, floating, up, and around, and down... Everything moving... Heat, vapid, cloying, making your clothes stick... The Commanding Officer of the Base Hospital appeared in the cabin doorway. A Medical Major, tall, straight, red-faced, looking as if he had just swallowed a poker... As if it had stuck in his throat, was making his face purple... The door, too small for him... Couldn't

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bend over... Not with that uniform... Army was too small for him... "Take an order!" he roared. Anne looked up. "Yes?" she said politely. So, he was trying to be hard-boiled, was he? Beads of perspiration standing on his forehead under the leather vizor... Being so damn military, he couldn't wipe them... He sat down on the bench. It was as though only his hips and knees were jointed... His red face, turning white, slowly...

"I'll make it in quadruplicate!" said Anne, "the fourth carbon copy to be sent to,—" The Major, going green, rising abruptly, making for the cabin door, grabbing the door jamb, going... Anne turned to her typewriter. Thank God...

...

The Master Hospital Sergeant bent his head to come through the door. He was a tall man of fifty, with high cheek bones, and long, black moustache ends. Aloof, dignified, he stood there. "No hurry about those copies," he said to Anne. "No hurry at all." He took his cap off, wiped his forehead with his sleeve, sat down on the bench, across the cabin. He'd been in the army twenty-four years, he told Anne. The army paper work, he said he understood. He knew how long it took to write a letter, or an order, and make six copies... He knew which ones to send, which ones to file... The system had been goin', he said, since 1870. These civilian doctors didn't understand it... They got impatient... "But don't let 'em hurry you, Miss Wentworth. Far better to take your time, and do the thing right." Slowly the Master Hospital Sergeant bent and picked up the copies. Anne watched. He couldn't have moved slower, and still been moving. He put the copies into War Department envelopes. He sat down and addressed them, scrawling slowly, The Surgeon General of the Army, The Adjutant General, The Chief Surgeon A.E.F., The Division Surgeon...

"Then, do we always make four copies, Sergeant?" Anne asked. How could a man be so calm in war?

"No. Usually," said the Master Hospital Sergeant slowly, "we make six."

...

The Adjutant came in. He sat down, pushed his cap back, gazed at the papers. 'Sir, you ought to have had four copies of this order.' That was the Master Hospital Sergeant, bending over him, his face patient... "Four copies? What the H,— I mean," he looked at Anne, typewriting, "why the blazes do we want four copies of that thing?" 'Required by the Articles of War, Sir. I'll have Corporal McFee do it over, so's you can see how it looks when it's done right.' The Master Hospital Sergeant carried away the papers, sadly.

"If I'd ever thought that I'd get made an Adjutant,—" The young man mopped his forehead. Anne stopped typewriting,— men liked to have you listen... "Hang it! I'd have enlisted in the ranks first!"

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Anne watched him. He was one of the coming young obstetricians,– he'd given up a growing practice to come to this war. "I joined up with this unit to do surgery. Here I am, trying to do this damn fool paper work. The better I get, the longer I'll stay at it. Hell," he said, "I'll never see a patient!" He sat, slumped back, heels on the carpet, eyes on a spot between them. The cabin, Anne, and the Adjutant, all the typewriters, made great circles...

"It's a great war!" said Anne...

...

Corporal McFee came in, carrying papers. He dumped the papers on the Master Hospital Sergeant's table, stood, saying nothing. Anne stopped typewriting. So he wanted to talk, too, did he... A nice boy,– he'd been in Geoffrey's class at college... "That's all a college education does for you in this man's army!" he said. "Gets you made a clerk. Gee, I wish I'd kept it dark that I could typewrite! Next time they ask me what I know how to do, I'll tell 'em nothing."

"Nobody seems to be doing what they meant to,–"

"There's a feller down there in the company that's just crazy to do typewriting," said the Corporal. "They've got him emptying swill, peeling potatoes. I'd rather peel potatoes than do these blooming copies. Say, why do you figure they do everything the longest way they can?" "It seems to be a system." You could get things done faster if you didn't always have to listen,– "Well," the Corporal brightened. "I should worry! I'm going to transfer to the Air Service soon's I get to France. That's why I joined this bunch,– to get there quicker. Wouldn't be surprised if I was flying over the front in six months."

"That will be great!" said Anne...

...

Tea, on the deck. Anne stretched herself back in her steamer chair, and looked out at the mounting, sinking blue horizon. For fourteen days the ship had steamed in the center of this vast, empty circle. Once the funnels of another ship had poked up over the shoulder of the world, and gone down... In front of Anne a guard paced, looking outward. For periscopes,– his eye caught Anne's as he turned. 'You can't see nothin'!' He paced on, eyes out... Blue waves, dancing in the sun. The deck steward coming, with more food. A nurse lolled in the steamer chair next Anne's. A pale, red-haired woman, with upturned nose and red lips. 'Ahearn, Allen, Andrews,' names Anne had sat below and copied, 'Austin, Baker, Brophy,' this red-haired one must be Brophy. Agnes Theresa Brophy,– she'd come to the office two days before to get her death tag... Had made Corporal McFee hang it round her neck... Stood, rather too near him Anne thought, while he did it... Had raised her red lips,– Color had flushed among the roots of Corporal McFee's hair... The woman was talking now to Captain Boutelier in the chair beyond hers. A stout man, in a uniform of linen

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khaki, smooth with the greyish shine of many washings,– the leather of his puttees dark and limber, moustache hogged short, campaign hat tilted so that it almost touched his bushy eyebrows... 'Say, let me order you some more champagne, dear.' He leaned nearer, talking, 'When I was coming home from the Islands...' Familiar voice, that... Voice that had talked to her the first night out,– the man had been unhappy over leaving his wife... Seemed a long while back...

The deck steward bent over Anne, pouring her tea out. A pale, drawn face under the shining vizor... A man who'd suffered,– 'Lovely afternoon, Miss!' The man smiled, suddenly. 'Lemon? Two lumps?' He swung his tray up to his shoulder. The smile vanished, like a puff of frail smoke. Lines about his mouth, about his eyes, that deepened... Eyes, searching the ocean, jerking back and forth along the blue horizon... The terror, that lurked,– the man moved quickly to the next chair. Ready to smile again... Two years of smiling above that lurking terror in the great sea...

...

Evening. They danced. Little Drennan, the Irish Quartermaster, grasped Anne's dress, whirling her, panting. "A guy gets lonely," he said. "All these docs, you know,– They're a fine bunch." Drennan sat down, mopping his forehead. "But they ain't... They ain't... Well, you know what I mean." The young man ran his fingers through his dark hair. Anne nodded at him. "Say, I get awful lonesome," he said. "I got a wife and two kids home. My wife, she brought 'em to the station..." He stopped. Tears in the man's eyes... "Say, I don't know how I'm goin' to get along without 'em..." The music struck up. He sat there, staring, absent... Miss Brophy came, with Captain Boutelier, and sat down. The little Quartermaster colored, suddenly ... Then he turned and asked the nurse to dance... They whirled off.

"Say, Miss Wentworth, that Brophy girl certainly can dance." Boutelier shoved over, next Anne. "Shall you and I try?" Danced well, the Captain... His face, too near hers... The orchestra, thank Heaven, playing Home, Sweet Home, now... '... Be it ev-er so hum-bul...' Little Drennan and the Brophy woman whirling past them... The Brophy, her gold-red head thrown back, red lips parted, smiling... Little Drennan, his eyes shut, dancing, dancing... 'There's no-o place like...' Tears, trickling down the little Quartermaster's pale face, dropping onto the square, blue shoulder of Miss Brophy... 'Ho-o-o-ome...' He stood, gulping, pulling out a brown khaki handkerchief... Brophy, watching him... Her lips closing into a hard line...

"Well, I guess that's over," Anne said...

...

Morning. Sunshine. The great sea, empty, as it had been for more than two weeks. 'Pardon, Miss!' The deck steward tapped Anne on the shoulder. 'Your life preserver, Miss?' "Oh, I forgot!" She went back to her chair and picked the thing up... A bugle. Lifeboat drill...

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She made her way toward the stern deck. The great ship tipping, tipping, the shadows of the deck floor creeping sideways... Deck straightening again... The ship, zig-zagging, aimless, in the great, blue circle... Sailor, lowering a lifeboat... It hung there, level with the rail, shutting the light out. Was this,– 'They're going to leave 'em down now, till we get in,' said the Ambulance boy, who stood next Anne at the boat drill. "Miss Wentworth!" The ship's officer, calling the roll... "Here!" Anne took her place in the line. "Mr. Perkins? Mr. Smith? Mr. Slade? Where are these gentlemen today?" The officer, looking at the Ambulance boy next Anne... Looking down... Shouting out the next name...

"Drunk again," the boy said...

...

Afternoon. Summer heat, glaring from the smooth sea. Anne lay alone amid the empty deck chairs. Watching the pale horizon rise and fall beyond the lifeboat swinging at the deck's rail... From the saloon came music,– nurses singing... 'Nearer my God..... to Thee,' they chanted... Anne smiled. Nearer than they thought, p'rhaps... The sentry turned and winked at Anne as he walked past... She clasped her hands and laid her head against them. Would they go on forever, sailing, sailing? Twisting, turning... Meeting nobody and getting nowhere... 'Still all my song shall be... Nearer, my God, to Thee...' Sleepy...

...

A shrill whistle. She sat up, grabbed for her life preserver. So they had got you... This was the End, then... God, how you wanted to see France... The sentry stood, two fingers between his lips, eyes on the ocean. A periscope? The ship's First Officer, a square little Scotchman, rolled down the deck toward him... 'Amer-r-rican destroyer, on the hor-r-rizon!' his Scotch brogue... Anne jumped up. Silly to cry...

...

A black speck, high up on the great rim of the round world... Anne, leaned on the rail, curving her hand across her eyes, looking, looking... Nurses, officers, coming, standing, looking... Across that great, shining, empty space, the black speck, growing bigger...

"God! Ain't it great to look at somethin'!" said the sentry...

...

Soldiers, on the deck below... Crowding the rail, gazing, silent. The deck behind Anne crowded... Watching the thing come... People, out there at last... The great, round circle no longer empty, empty... Not all alone now... That tiny, moving thing coming toward you... Come! Come quicker! A submarine might,– Before you get here... From the destroyer's bridge, a man, wigwagging... A nurse laughed. 'Say, we've been awful lonesome...'

...

The destroyer swerved, tipping, turning sideways. Slender, grace-

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ful, like a greyhound... On her decks sailors, in small, white hats were moving... From her mast a flag, its red and white stripes, white stars against a blue field, fluttering out against the water... Something in your blooming throat that choked you...

"Ye-a-a-a!" a great shout went up among the soldiers...

...

Tea. Gayety. Everyone talking, laughing... The life preservers dropped by their feet, forgotten... Hell, wasn't this slender, grey thing out there, guarding? Drennan stopped by Anne's chair, talking across her to Miss Brophy. "Boy, it makes me feel weak!" He sat down on Anne's foot rest. "It wasn't so much I minded getting drowned, as the idea of this whole shipload goin' to the bottom and no one knowin'." Drennan stepped to the rail and spat across it. "Say, girls, where's she goin'?" He stood looking out at the destroyer. "God! Don't tell me she's goin' to leave us,–" Anne and Miss Brophy jumped up, stood beside him. The destroyer, darting away to the north... From her decks four puffs of white smoke rising... Shots, cracking through the noiseless void of ocean... They looked, looked... Nothing there, but the great sea, and the destroyer, steaming back, darting in small zig-zags across the greater zig-zags of the steamer.

"Say, this certainly is a great war!" said Miss Brophy...

...

Dusk. Another destroyer, circling the steamer, taking its place ahead, zig-zagging... The first one, slowing down, coming up closer, closer... The sailors on the clean, steel decks stood, looking upward. Women... The nurses, on the liner's deck, waved. The sailors on the tossing craft below them, snatched off canvas hats, and twirled them... An officer stepped out from among the sailors, raising a megaphone. Words, coming through the swish of water. Talk on the steamer's deck stopped. Listen... "... broadside..... submarine..... sighted on surface ..... four thirty-five..... this afternoon... Good-bye... Good luck..." Everyone talked at once, turned to each other... Anne watched the lithe, grey thing turn, speed away to the westward. Smaller, smaller... Men on it,– lonely... Was everyone in war always so lonely? It went. A tiny speck against the golden sky at the horizon...

...

Dinner time. Anne made her way down the lurching stairway. Queer it would be to get back to stairs that didn't,– Better not think about that,– Mightn't get back... Everyone with life preservers on their shoulders... Hungry... Never in all your life felt so hungry... To eat,– might be the last meal. Good to be alive, to feel your muscles moving... Not afraid to die... It wasn't that... Not even afraid to swim for a long time... Or to be shelled in lifeboats... Just so you could live... Life was what you wanted... The Chief Steward, bland, stout, standing at the stairs' foot, bowing to the officers and nurses. 'Good evening, Sir!' 'Good evening, Mad,–'

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A crash.

"My God!" The Chief Steward's face white... His hands,– claws, – clutching the post at Anne's side... Finger nails white, transparent ... Eyes of a hunted animal slowly turning, looking across his shoulder ... His hands loosening, pinkness spreading into the white nails... Blue chest with its gold buttons rising... The Chief Steward smiling, bowing... "Just a tray dropped,– thank God!" he said. "Good evening, Madam!"

...

"Miss Wentworth!" Saunders, the office orderly, stood by the dining room door, waiting for her... "Major wantscher in the office!" he said. Long, white passageway, smelling of paint... Their life preservers bumping as they passed along it...

The Major, standing, nervous in the little cabin: "Take an order!" Her note book,– damn the note book... The steamer rolled it into corners... "Hospital Order Number,–" "Thirty-six," said Anne. "Thirty-six. One: Members of the Base Hospital will not wear illuminated wrist watches on the deck. Two: They will not speak loudly on the deck. Three: They will sleep, in their own quarters, fully clothed, and with their life preservers adjusted at all times. By order,–" The Major turned. "Send it to me in the dining room," he said. He went out. Anne slipped carbons between sheets of paper. So it was as bad as all that, was it... Typewriter, clicking... Hope they won't get you before you get your dinner... Like to eat once more... Hurry... Must eat... The taste of Life between your teeth,– she pulled out the six copies,– Such a tart, sweet taste... You wanted,–

"Orderly!" she shouted...

...

Night. Blackness that came at you... Moving ink, above, below, before you... Anne leaned on the rail, her face against the mist that caught in her hair. From somewhere below came the swish, swash, swish of water... Water, that had been going past for seventeen days, swishing, swashing. The deck pressed up under Anne's feet... The ship, listing a bit, turning, on another zig-zag. Faster than she had yet gone... Lurching forward... The black shadow of the prow... Ahead of it, a golden serpent swimming,– the faint, phosphorescent wake of the destroyer... The sentry paced behind her in the darkness... 'They tell yer to look out, n' if you see anythin', to whistle,' he whispered, passing. 'How the Hell are you goin' to see anything on a night like this?' "It's like black velvet, isn't it?" Anne turned. The man was gone. She held her face against the mist, staring into blackness... Submarines, out there... Young Germans, down below there, peering into darkness... Young Americans, up here above, peering out into the same, thick, inky darkness... Trying to kill... Trying to escape... Danger... Or was it Madness?

"You're not sleeping on deck, so I suppose it's all right to let you

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stay here." A lieutenant stopped next Anne, leaning his elbows on the rail, looking forward. Greenbaum,– one of the young ones,– a 'research man' they called him... He wore a great pistol at his hip. Officer of the Day that meant... They stood. The darkness swished past... "Isn't this great?" The man laughed. "I've been instructing the guards to watch out there for periscopes. I myself," he lowered his head, peering through thick glasses, "can't see the water." Anne laughed: "Neither can I. Funny," she said,– "the way it makes you feel. We ought to be miserable,–"

"Hell! How could we? After those safe years? Life, when you thought you had it before you for a long, long while, was nothing. Now,–" He saluted, solemn, as the guard passed. "Just the same," he went on, "I'm glad I'm not married. Can't blame these married fellers for getting a bit low. For us, it doesn't matter. If we win, why, so much to the good, and if we lose,– well, the game was worth the candle. War's damn nonsense, but if it had to happen, I'm glad I was free to come to this one. Well, I must be running,– looking for periscopes. I've got a cousin in the German Navy. He might be out there." The young man disappeared into the darkness. Anne groped her way to the wall, felt along it until she touched a canvas... Around the canvas screen, somewhere, the door... The darkened saloon... The stairs, with their dim light, swaying, swaying... Had to go down them some time... No more air till morning...

...

"Your 'ot-water bag, Miss." The stewardess bowed, backing from the cabin doorway. "Thought it might be a comfort, Miss, even with your clothes on." A small woman, with grey hair and a lined, white face, eyes tired, haunted... 'You're married, Stewardess?' Anne began taking her hair down,– you could swim better,– "Yes, Miss. And 'ave a son in the Navy, and two little tots, 'is children, waitin' for me at Liverpool, Miss. My other son went down on the Goliath in the Dardanelles, Miss." 'And you've been across how many times?' Anne brushed her brown hair... "Many a time, in the old days, Miss. I'd retired, but when the war came, I volunteered for service. If I get through this time, it'll be my twenty-eighth since the war, Miss. I'd stop at thirty, only they've lost so many. I,– I think I'd 'ook my door open tonight, Miss," the tired face was backing away, now. "People 'ave got caught in,–" 'Good night, Stewardess.' Anne held her hand out. The woman wiped her bony, work-worn hand, and held it forward. These Americans,– shakin' 'ands with,– 'Good luck!' Anne clasped the thin hand. No grip,–

"Thank you, I'm sure! Good night, Miss!"

...

Life preserver, sticking into your back... Its corners, hurting... Anne shifted in the narrow ship's bunk... The throb of engines, hurling you onward into darkness. Heat... No air... Everything

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screwed shut... The throb of engines... The nurse, in the berth below Anne, asleep, groaning... The air, dead... The wall, vibrating, rattling the fixtures... Singing, in your head... Getting nearer, going farther... Stifling...Taking ether... Your bed, Mother's face, bending over... No. Thousands of miles of sea between... Sea, filled with submarines... Germans, waiting to shell you... Taking ether so that when they shelled you, you wouldn't feel... If you were hit, there would be lots of doctors... If only they wouldn't ram sticks into your back, through your ribs, and twist them... If they'd take this thing off your head... So you could breathe... Air... Air... 'God, where am I?' Anne sat up. In some kind of a bed, smelling of white paint... Ceiling, touching your head... A bunk below you... A nurse, groaning... 'Danger zone,' Anne murmured. 'Life preserver...' She lay down... No air... More of darkness to be got through...

...

Morning. Steward, unscrewing a porthole, pushing it open... Air... Rushing in, driving the fumes out... Out beyond the round hole, the blue sea... Another day... So you were still here. Anne stretched herself, and yawned. Muscles, still pulling,– thank God...

...

She walked down the corridor. There was little Saunders, the office orderly, dressed in blue jeans, carrying a great trunk... 'Ain't goin' to run your errands no more, Miss Wentworth.' The boy, looking as if he'd cry... All his cock-sureness vanished... In its place, something furtive... "Why, what's the matter?" Anne said.

"Got in the brig last night." He set the trunk down, glanced round quickly. "Say, I lit a cigarette in the barber's shop an' blew the match out," he muttered. "I stepped out on the deck and threw it over. Someone seen a spark. Had me arrested for showin' lights on the deck. Evans was Officer of the Guard, and the old Major made him lock me up. The brig's way down God knows where,– in the bottom... Say, if I ever see that old Major in civilian life, won't I,–"

"But you're out now," Anne said.

"Yes, I'm out, but only because of Evans. Say, he's a prince, that Evans. Sat down there all night outside the damned brig. Said if he was goin' to lock a guy in a rat hole, and the guy drowned, he'd drown with 'im... Guess the Major didn't wanter lose Lootenant Evans." The boy picked the trunk up, staggered forward.

"It's a great war!" he said...

...

Anne went out on deck. Sun, on the blue sea, a path of glimmering silver. She walked toward the bow, sniffing the cool breeze. Beyond the prow, the destroyer, twisting, turning, spewing white foam... Above it white gulls, soaring, queer heads turning this way, that way, looking downward... Anne turned the corner of the deck house. She stopped,–

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Land! Land at last... She drew a long breath. Blue-green and purple, rising from the water to the northward. Beloved Earth, with trees and rocks and green grass... To be alive, and to see land to walk on... She strode swiftly. Ireland, and the land breeze, filling her nostrils...

...

"They won't let us off," complained Miss Brophy. The steamer lay at anchor in Queenstown Harbor. Anne leaned against the rail. Next her stood Evans, looking through field glasses. He turned, quietly, looking down at Anne. White teeth, that shone from a tanned face. 'Want to look?' He held out the field glasses. Anne screwed them. Blur... Blur... Then suddenly a green field... Cool grass, with flowers in it, slanting up toward a grey wall... You could cross there,— put your foot on that flat stone... Walk up, up to the pasture, lie on its damp turf... Feel Earth's frame, strong and cool against your shoulders... God... She handed the glasses back. Evans' eyes,— He, too... She shook her head. The shore...

"It's a great war," said Evans...

...

England. A quaint, jiggling train, speeding among small fields, hedges, trees that looked too big... Anne leaned against the window of the carriage, gazing. A British soldier, guarding a bridge, presenting arms. Standing there, stiff, in the dust that the train left... Saluting America... Tears, filling Anne's eyes... Silly... At a grade crossing, a crowd of people, watching. Men, in strange suits of bright blue. 'The wounded,' someone explaining... 'Americans! Yankees! Hip, hip, hooray!' A shout... Those tears again... Silly... A station. Everyone piling out, walking along the platform. Crowds, watching them as though they were a show troop... 'Say, what's this burg?' Little Saunders stopped before an English girl in a grey felt hat and a raincoat. 'I beg your pardon? Ah, yes! This is Oxford.' 'All one to me,' said Saunders. He turned to Anne, smiling, confidential: "Say, just look at that toy train,— What 'ud these birds do if they should see an honest to God train?" 'Boy, it 'ud break their bridges,' said another...

An English gentleman held out his hand to Anne. She shook it. A pleasant person,— he looked like Uncle Caleb,— 'I say, which are your officers,' the gentleman was asking... Anne pointed toward the Major. 'Ah, yes? Then they, too, dress like Boy Scouts?' A gong... People scrambling on board... English people reaching up, shaking your hand... 'Good luck! Good luck!' Sadness in their eyes... The Uncle-Caleb gentleman, still talking to you... 'You all look so very young,' he was saying...

"We are," Anne said...

...

She sank down in her corner. Tired. Hot. One's head still swim-

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ming with the rhythm of the ocean. Slipping past, the quiet Isis, green fields. Golden sun, touching,– that must be Magdalen Tower... Uniform, buttoned tight round your throat... To get somewhere... To sleep where you could have your windows open... To get your hair washed... To eat, on dry land...

...

Darkness. The train still moving. Anne rested her head on the sill of the open window. Nice little trains, with windows that would open... They ought to see the lights of London soon now... Anne closed her eyes. There would be a hotel, with big beds...

Lights. Nurses, putting on hats... The train stopped with a jerk. Anne opened the door and jumped down on a platform. A sailor stood there. Why a sailor? "Where are we?" she asked. "Beg pardon?" The sailor, bending his head to listen,– he didn't understand the language, it seemed. 'What town are we in?' Hundreds of nurses, round him... "Ow! You're in Southampton, sister! If the sisters'll move right out 'ere, they'll find the gangway." Gangway? Another ship. No bed, then? No dry land,– after three weeks at sea... Anne staggered forward. A great, red cross was painted on the ship's side... Supper,– overdone roast beef and squares of cabbage... A British officer, who led them downward. Two hundred narrow, white bunks, slung in two tiers. An elevator shaft up through the middle... From it the smell of unclean lavatories, and of cabbage, cooking... Eighty women, sprawling on bunks, talking, pulling nightgowns out of their suit cases... Anne watched them. Her head dizzy, swimming... That foul smell. Couldn't stay here... Couldn't... She stumbled over open suit cases toward the hatchway...

...

She stood on the top deck. The air was damp, filled with the smell of barnacles, of seaweed. On the forward deck the Hospital Corps men were piling baggage. 'Put that down there, God damn you, you ....' Captain Boutelier's voice. He stood, campaign hat over one eye, cursing. 'Here, you God damn son of a .....' The Top Sergeant, cursing. Men, carrying trunks, and cursing. Little Saunders, in his blue jeans, dumping a trunk down, kicking it before he left it... Anne watched. God, if only you had somebody to talk to... The world moving, floating... Crowds... Everyone lonely... Lonely... Darkness ... Men's voices swearing... She made her way toward the hatchway. The smell of sewerage met her...

...

Air, thick with the breath of sleeping nurses. The smell of perspiration, lavatories that didn't function, cabbage cooking. Anne brushed past corsets dangling, shirt waists, cotton chemises. Found her bunk, pulled her clothes off. The bunk hard and narrow... Tired,– 'Say, girls!' A sudden cackling of women. Anne raised her head up. More nurses, filing in. Lights lighted. The strange nurses giggled as they

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took their clothes off. Anne turned over, eyes shut. No sleep... Was that what war was?

...

Morning. The hospital ship lay at anchor in some channel, somewhere. Anne walked along the boat deck. 'That's the Isle of Wight,' said Greenbaum, pointing. Anne sat down, with her back against a life-raft. Faint warmth in the pale, English sunlight. The sea, glassy, the sky a still, grey-blue. The smoke from the buildings on the shore curled upward, hung there. Sea gulls soared, dipping, squawking over floating garbage. Greenbaum sat down next her. Evans, strolling, stopped, pulled out his pipe and lit it. "God, but it's wonderful never to have to think!" He sat down, leaned his broad back up against the lifeboat.

"You know, they say we'll be here all day," said Anne. "I had an idea that when you went to wars you hurried." From the shore an airplane snorted upward, circled, up, up, smaller, smaller. Anne tipped her head back, rested it on the life-raft. Years ago she and Geoffrey had gone miles in a train to see an airplane... She watched the tiny speck that soared out, across the channel. A new dimension to the world, now... Evans beside her, stretching...

"When you go to war you learn not to hurry," he said...

...

Mail, going ashore at three. This mail, the Major warned them, would be censored. Anne sat, her back against a lifeboat, twirling the corrugations of her pen against her front teeth. What could you write? The voyage,– That was the 'movement of military forces....' That submarine that,– no... That wouldn't get by... People,– No, somebody was going to read this... Behind the lifeboat sat Drennan and Miss Brophy.

"You're a great one," said Miss Brophy. "You'd just as soon run off and talk to these strange girls on this other unit as talk to me,–"

"Why shouldn't I?" said Drennan. "Say, I ain't tied to you any ways, am I?" Drennan shifted a little further from Miss Brophy. Ought to go down, anyway, and write a letter. Write to Maggie... Tried it once, but somehow, couldn't get a-goin'... Not much, way off here, to say to Maggie... Between him and Maggie lay an expanse of ocean, and of danger, a whole new world of people that Maggie never heard of... What was there, now, to talk about with Maggie? The things they talked about,– the kids, the movies, neighbors,– all that was vanished. Hell, it wasn't talkin' that mattered, anyway, with Maggie... It was bein' there... Comin' home nights, holdin' the kids, watchin' her get supper... Settin' round,– Goin' to bed,– Christ... Maggie... Maggie... Every night,– Hell,– you couldn't put that in a letter,–

"Oh, you don't like me any more, don't cher?" said Miss Brophy. She'd show him... This puppy... Couldn't keep away,– him... Always sniffin' round you...

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Drennan shifted. Women... Never thought he'd go to war with women. He thought he'd hit a man's world. Here she was, next him. Red lips closing into a hard line. A curl that stuck out against her neck above her collar. Meant to keep away from women,– But a guy got homesick... Wanted to talk to 'em... If you was goin' to get along without 'em nights, forever, you hadda talk to one sometimes in the daytime... Brophy, hitchin' round... He put his hand out, grabbed her arm, soft under his fingers. Christ... "Say, sit down, won't cher?" The red line of her lips took on an ugly look about the corners... Them green eyes, under the red-gold lashes... A sharp pain stung Drennan's wrist. Jesus Christ, she'd whacked him... Miss Brophy rose and walked toward the hatchway... A soft breeze tossing the curly red hair... The Quartermaster got up and spat across the ship's rail.

"Hell!" he muttered...

...

Anne twirled her pen. You couldn't write the family about that... Captain Boutelier came up, brisk, heavy, sat down next her. "Well," he said. "Got here without losing a single man. Extraordinary record! Expected to lose at least five..." "Lose them? Where?" said Anne. "If we'd been torpedoed, we'd have all gone,–" "A.W.O.L.,– absent without leave. Look at that train we rode on. They had a chance to hop off each stop. Now, in Cuba....." Anne listened to what the men had done in Cuba...

"Say, Sergeant!" The Captain bellowed at the Top Sergeant, passing. The man saluted, solemn. Been fifteen years in the army, Sergeant Brady, and he knew it... "Sir!" he snapped out. The Captain saluted. He fixed his eye acutely on the Sergeant. "There isn't any cot in my bedding roll, Sergeant," he said. The Sergeant stood there, blank-faced. 'Yes, Sir!' He saluted, whirled, brought his feet together, walked off. "A damned good soldier," said the Captain. "When we were in the islands," he went on... Anne listened. Did nothing interesting ever happen in 'the islands'...

"Sir!" Sergeant Brady, before them again, expressionless as ever. "Sergeant?" "There's a cot in the Captain's bedding roll, Sir." "Right, Sergeant. Er, Sergeant, you've got a guard posted over our stuff?" "Yes, Sir." The Captain saluted. The Sergeant saluted, wheeled, brought his feet together, walked off.

"A *damn* good soldier," said the Captain...

...

"Or, er, Doctor Boutelier!" Doctor Carey stood before them, nervous. An eminent physician... "I, er, wanted to speak to Doctor Boutelier," he said to Anne. "Go ahead!" said the Captain. The two men stepped toward the rail together. "I, er, I'm pretty sure, I, er, saw some of our men, er, getting mixed up in the baggage belonging to the Pittsburgh Unit."

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"Hell, Carey!" said the Captain. "Can't the Pittsburgh Unit guard their own stuff?"

...

Dusk. Out in the grey mist small naval craft, eerie black shadows, darting backward, forward, circling the great ship, flashing messages with lights of silver. Anne leaned against the upper deck rail, watching. Below, on the forward decks, dim figures of men in khaki. You could see white faces... Music,– Men's voices, singing.

'There's a long, long trail a winding
Into the land of my dreams,–'

Sadness in the cadence... Something that they felt and that they had not told... Something that they had hidden under curses... A British officer lit a cigarette, threw the match over. The faces turned toward him. Treason,– for less than that young Saunders had spent a night in,–

'Where the nightingales are singing
And a white moon beams:–'

The voices, chanting... Anne felt the rail under her elbows tremble. The ship moving... The Channel...

'There's a long, long night of waiting,–'

The music, plaintive, swaying... The tiny, protecting boats darting ahead into the dimness...

'Until my dreams all come true;–
Till the day when I'll be going down
That long, long trail with you.'

Lights on the shore fading, dying in the mist... Ahead, greyness, danger...

...

"Everybody below, please!" British voice, giving an order. The stairway bounding up to meet you. The sleeping ward. Two hundred suit cases, belching forth their contents. Two hundred women, taking their clothes off. Giggling, talking... Reaching for things, putting them into bags. Getting out kimonos, putting fleshy arms into their sleeves. Winding their hair on curlers... The place was hot and breathless. Fumes of cooking... Fumes from the lavatory that was dirty... Not a porthole open on the whole ship. The ward, and all the opened suit cases, and all the women, dressed and undressed, rose and fell, rose and fell, and lurched backward, forward. Better lie down, quickly...

Anne pulled her life preserver near her on the narrow, hard bunk. There were not lifeboats enough to go round on this ship. And if there had been, you couldn't get out of this place... Didn't mind dying, if it were in the open. But to die here in a hole, with all these women...

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With no more fresh air... Bells, ringing in your ears, getting nearer, farther... Someone taking you by the throat, pressing you down... Choking... You must kick loose... Must make one struggle... Anne's head bumped against an iron rod. Where was she? Light, falling on tiers of bunks, covered with people, tossing... The smell of sewer gas... Ah, yes! Hospital ship. The English Channel... She sank back. The bells again... Rolling you under...

...

Cool air... Anne raised her head. A sailor standing next her opened a porthole. A door led to a narrow strip of deck. She stepped out into the cool, night air. She climbed a narrow, iron hatch, the breeze flapping her grey cape. The hurricane deck, rows of men lying, sleeping, rolled in blankets. Two of them raised tousled heads and gazed at a girl's figure as it scurried past them. The great ship moving slowly. Green lights,– an emerald necklace, hung in the dark sky... Slowly the dangling lights came nearer, nearer. From the shore, soft air smelling now of seaweed, now of mown grass... Anne stretched her arms. The emerald lights grew nearer, nearer, overhead now. 'Allo, America!' A child's voice, hoarse, out of the still dark. 'Allo, Yankee!' 'Allo Charlie Chaplin!' Children's hoarse voices, laughing, chattering in a strange tongue. Couldn't see them... They were somewhere, out there under the green lights... Silence... Then, again, the voices, farther away now...

'E-e-et's a long way
To Tee-pa-rai-rai...'

they sang slowly, carefully. They laughed. The great ship left them, in the darkness.

'E-e-et's a long way to go...'

The voices fading, fading. That must have been a breakwater the ship went past... Why children, singing on a breakwater, at two in the morning? France... Mystery... Anne sat down on a bulkhead. Her head nodded...

...

Someone pulled at her cloak. A tall young man in a blue uniform, gold epaulets, bending over. 'Where am I?' The world, all grey... It had been black when she sat down...

"Oh, I beg your pardon," the man said quickly. British... "I thought somebody must have dropped a rug. Well, we're safe in harbor,–" He stood, looking at a grey hill above the buildings, his profile, white, clear,– long fingers toying with a gilded button... "We got here, thank God!" The words burst from him. "Is it as dangerous as that?" said Anne. The man's hand trembled... "More dangerous than that....." He was gone...

...

Gobbling breakfast. Hardly wait to get done... Going ashore right

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off,– bags had to be ready before you came down. Tea for breakfast. No matter, landing in France, at last... Oatmeal. You had to chew it. Couldn't. No matter... France... You were at The War now ... Greasy, uncooked bacon. Hurry... Couldn't eat it. France... In a few minutes you'd be speeding toward the front lines... Better go get your coat, stand near the gangway... Everyone nervous. No one eating. Anne got up...

...

Waiting. There seemed, after all, to be no hurry. The hospital ship lay, tied up to a great pier. Anne wandered on the top deck, watched English nurses walking up and down the quai, their scarlet capes and white coifs flapping in the salt breeze. On the other side, ancient stone houses faced the harbor. A green hill rose behind them. Red-tasselled sailors pushed flying boats out of sheds onto the water. One by one the frail things snorted, skimmed across the water, rose and circled upward, upward. The human spirit, rising... Anne wandered back. A group of nurses stood, silent, gazing down toward the main deck. 'Say, they're loading wounded.' A nurse stepped aside, pushing Anne forward.

A man's face... Ghastly white, looking up at her... Anne clutched the rail, leaned forward, gazing at him. The man was lying on a stretcher. Her eye caught his. 'No one..... can hurt me..... any more ..... than I've been hurt,' the face said. It did not stir a muscle. Just the eyes moved. It was as if the man had finished caring... Two British soldiers carrying him, staggered a little, perspiration dripping from their faces. Men were heavy... They heaved the stretcher upward, bumped it down on a sort of platform, turned away. As though it were a log of wood that they had put there... 'Ward C,' called someone. The face dropped backwards, downward, away from sunshine. The face unchanged, indifferent... The darkness of the elevator shaft closed round it...

A British officer leaned by the gangway of the steamer, shining boots crossed before him, riding whip in hand. He lit a cigarette, puffed the smoke upward, laughed at a joke that someone made beside him. 'Fracture of both hips,' came a voice from the gangway. The officer held his cigarette in air a moment. "Fracture of both hips. E Ward," he called. He went on talking, laughing... A white face, lips drawn, eyes closed, came on the stretcher,– a young face, with darkish hair that stuck in patches of wetness on his thin, white forehead. They slung the log of wood up onto the elevator platform. "E Ward," called the officer by the elevator. As the thing started, a pair of brown eyes looked up. Anne smiled at a young boy as he went down...

"Nephritis." "Nephritis, C Ward." "C Ward." A face, indifferent, plunging into darkness... "Gas." "Gas, D Ward..." "D Ward..." Bandage over his eyes... The officers did not even glance at the logs of wood as they went by. The young man at the rail, in jaunty

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cap and belt and shining buttons, smoked calmly. And always there below her Anne saw faces,– faces beyond pain, beyond excitement. Faces written with infinite weariness, infinite indifference... "German," called the voice from the gangway. "German," the officer at the rail tossed his cigarette across his shoulder. "German," the officer at the elevator called.

"They say they put them in the bottom of the ship," said Miss Ahearn behind Anne, "so if it gets torpedoed, they go down first." Anne looked down into blue eyes,– like an American, this... A shade of anxiety in this face... The face sunk, backward... "Nephritis, C Ward." "C Ward." Another face... Another log of wood... Going down, somewhere.

Sickness... Nausea, gripping you... Twisting your stomach... You couldn't watch this. Anne turned. People... Logs of wood, one after another... Men... Geoffrey... She fled along the deck. The clock on the tower by the quai was striking ten now. She tried to look at boats. To look at airplanes. To look at the quai of Hâvre. At quarter of eleven she went back there, where the crowd stood.

"Amputated left arm," she heard them calling. Still carrying them up the gangway... Still swinging them upward, plunking them down, mopping their brows... Faces, still sinking downward into darkness... Still indifferent... The officer by the rail looking at the sky in boredom, turning, lighting another cigarette, holding it up between his trim, long fingers... Again that nausea, gripping her throat, her stomach...

She turned. She faced the British officer of that morning. "Well, how are they getting on?" he said, cheerful. He glanced over the rail, peered down onto the quai. "Quite a lot left, I'm afraid. Shame to keep you people waiting like this!"

"I don't see," Anne stopped, embarrassed. "Those officers down there. How can they take it so casually?" she said. The officer laughed.

"Wait till you've been in this business three years,–" His face turned grim... "You'll see," he said. "You have to."

...

Noon time. Up the forward gangway the stretchers were still moving. Down the rear gangway American nurses filed, Anne among them. 'Nephritis...' 'Amputation. Both arms,' you could hear them calling... There was nowhere where you couldn't hear them... See them... Logs of wood, going slowly, one after the other.

The quai was covered with them. Human beings, lying there like baggage, along the dirty pavement. Anne bent over, passing a package of cigarettes among the stretchers. "Thank you, Miss." A little man at her feet smiled at her. "I'm sorry," Anne hesitated. How could you tell them... "Ow, we don't mind, Miss," the little man smiled. "We get a bit of Blighty out of it, you know..."

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"Better, anyhow, than staying out there," the man had one leg...
"Is it?" said Anne...

...

The Café des Trois Mariniers at Hâvre. Anne followed Greenbaum, as he made his way among the small, round, iron tables on the sidewalk. Greenbaum, it seemed, was perfectly at ease here... People, sitting at tables. Three huge Australians, felt hats turned up in front, husky, bronzed faces,– Surely they'd break those little chairs they sat on... Drinking out of tall, froth-covered glasses... A British nurse with an officer, her elbows on a table, smoking... On her face infinite weariness... Infinite boredom...

"Here's one!" Greenbaum and Anne sat down on metal chairs that jiggled. Crowds strolling, brushing past the table... The chatter of strange tongues... Belgian soldiers, colored tassels dangling... Swarthy Moroccans in khaki and red fezes... Algerians, in turbans... French Sudanese, in shabby blue, their coal-black faces solemn. British officers swinging their canes... American soldiers, like overgrown small boys, striding together... 'Hey, buddy...'

French girls, laughing... A woman beside you, holding out a tray of flowers... Greenbaum bought a coral-colored dahlia. Anne pinned it where the grey cape turned back across her shoulder. Greenbaum ordered Malaga. A woman brought it,– a woman with slicked black hair, full skirt, felt slippers... Three French officers, sitting at the table in front, sipping something out of tiny glasses, talking... You couldn't understand them... 'We'd get to London,' the English nurse, enunciating clearly, 'and then, before you knew it, you'd be back here. And where would I be? Not this trip, old dear! I say, do you suppose she's ever going to fetch our tea?'

"There go two British staff officers," said Greenbaum, "those red tabs on their collars..." Anne watched them stride past.

"And there's a 'Blue Devil,'– look at his,–" Anne stopped. Why, the Australian officers at the next table had two girls with them... A moment ago there had been no girls there... Two French girls, laughing... The woman with the slicked hair brought Greenbaum's change. They got up. The Malaga made one feel warm, and pleasant inside. They stepped out among the crowds that strolled past. They strolled, swinging their new canes. Greenbaum looked down at Anne. Her face the color of the dahlia on the grey cape... 'Why, war's a pageant, isn't it?' Her eyes danced... 'Américaine! Tiens!' A Frenchman turned to look at her as she went past... Anne laughed.

"It's a great war!" said Greenbaum.

...

Anne climbed stone stairs. Broad, clean, yellow steps, winding up in a spiral, lit by the light from slit-like windows in the thick wall. In the middle of each stone step there was a hollow. Worn by nuns' feet in centuries of climbing... Up, up, one step after another. Anne trod,

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slowly. Fun... To represent one's country in pageant... Not what war ought to be like. Why did American soldiers look younger than the others? Old men, those others... More steps, twisting upward. Why were not steps made of stone in the U.S.? Was war to be like this, then, delicious, thrilling? Faces. This very morning... White faces of men who had been hurt so much that nothing more could hurt them... Logs of wood, tossed on an elevator... That young boy, with hair caught to the perspiration on his forehead... Not fun... Not fun... Still,—

Anne stopped in a doorway. A long, plain room, under the slanting gables. Cool, whitewashed walls, stone floor, broad casement windows that opened generously on chimney pots and blue sky. On each side six beds, with sheets of clean, white linen. A beautiful room... Strange that the nurses didn't like it... Agnes Theresa Brophy lay propped up on a bed in a blue wrapper, her red-gold hair spread gloriously across the pillow. Bare feet stuck out before her,— ugly feet... Four other nurses sat on beds, some dressed, some half dressed. Bare arms... Flesh... Brophy's green eyes gazed upward, at an airplane that winged its way like a great dragon fly across the sky, framed by the open window.

Anne sat down on her own bed. "Say, girls, I went on such a swell walk..." Miss Brophy jounced, restless. Anne turned the other way. The worst of war: you never got where someone wasn't talking... "Went way out into the country with Enneking, the dentist," Brophy went on. "We came to a swell, big hospital out there, girls, with terraces, and gardens. Say! All over the terraces were sitting men in blue suits." Would the woman never shut up... "Enneking says a man he picked up down on Main Street told him it was a venereal hospital for British officers. Said the place holds fifteen hundred,—"

"Say, girls!" Through the door burst Miss McCarthy. Angelina McCarthy was the youngest of the nurses, pink-faced, clear-skinned, blue-eyed, with unruly golden hair that stuck up... She had been sick all the way across the ocean, but now,— "Say, girls, *aren't* we havin' a good time?" said Angelina. "Say, I had the swellest tea with Evans..." 'Huh,' said Brophy, 'goin' round with Evans...' "The best *food*," said Angelina. She unpinned a white rose from her cape. "Say, weren't we lucky to get here the one day of the week that they can sell cake? Say, girls, I can't understand a word these people say. I say to 'em 'Combieng,' just like the phrase book tells you, and instead of sayin', 'Sees Frang,' they start off talkin'..." Miss Forbes came in. Miss Forbes was a heavy, thickset woman. "Just seen the Major downstairs," she said. "Say, girls, they say we're goin' to start tomorrow for some place. Say, I'll be kind of glad to get to work again," she added. "Those boys we saw this morning,—"

"What time is it?" Miss Brophy grabbed her shoes and stockings. "I'm goin' to dinner down at that swell ka-fay on the main street..."

"Say, girls, it's a great war!" said Angelina...

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From north to south... White buildings of the Renaissance, gleaming in August sunshine. White heat, beating on streets, along the sidewalks. White dust, rising from hot streets, falling on lumbering French trucks. The blue capes, heavy felt hats of the nurses, powdered with whiteness. Scarlet linings of the blue capes screaming in tropic sunshine... Camions, jolting onward, rattling the spines, vibrating the cheeks of nurses. Anne clung to the edge of the truck, easing the jounces. No sleep all night on that train, and nothing to eat this morning. They had jolted south twenty-four hours, leaving the front further and further behind with each jolt. Bordeaux... And you had thought that you were coming to war... God...

Vile odor of sewerage... Ditches, full of slime... Cathedral, jolting past... A wide street leading to suburbs. Pavements, ending... The street white powdery dust now... Trees, covered with dust, showing above high white walls... Children, watching the trucks, dressed in black aprons. Hunger, griping your insides... Teeth chattering... The smell of filth, and sewerage...

...

The sun beat hot on the tiny garden of the Café du Gros Figuier. La Mère Périgard stood in the garden, hands resting, palm down, on her broad hips. She watched camions, filled with strange women, in capes of marine blue, lined with scarlet. "Tiens! Albert!" said the Mère Périgard. Périgard scuttled down the stone-paved pathway. Down the street came running René, their small son. A pale, thin child, with brown eyes,– eyes so big, so shining, there seemed nothing else to his face: "Les Américaines," screamed René, flapping his dusty black smock. "Les infirmières," he gasped, breathless.

"C'est vrai, Albert?" said the Mère Périgard to her husband. "Ah," he shrugged, tossed his hands up, palm upward, "that the Americans should really come. Pfut! That is impossible!" "But it is true," shouted René, his slender hands twisting the black apron. "It is the sister of Marcel Fouquier who has told me. Her husband is a gendarme. He has said that great quantities of Americans are come this morning by train. Vive l'Amérique!" He bounded away, down the street.

"Eh bien! That is perhaps true. If it is true," said Périgard, "one will become rich..."

...

Dust gritted between Anne's teeth. If you'd been going to the front, sitting up all night on a French train would have been nothing ... Cinders pouring in... The faintness that comes from no food, the foul smell,– nothing would have mattered. But to go toward the rear... To know you never would hear a gun... That you might stay here twelve years... The truck stopped. The dust settled down. A new smell. A smell that engulfed you... Sickened... Sewerage, perspiration, negroes, cabbage... Filth, under bushes... Ahead, in the

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white wall, a high, grilled gate of iron... Over it a French flag drooping, dusty, tired... 'Hôpital Complémentaire...' said a sign. From the door of a house by the gate came a French soldier, in faded blue, and shouted at them. You couldn't understand him. The truck growled, snorted, lurched ahead through the gateway. The smell gripped your throat, twisted your stomach.

Tall cedar tree, pointing at the sky, before a yellowish stone building. Huge open windows. Men in nightshirts, blue soldiers' caps, bandages, standing in them. From the broad door, high up, curved iron steps descending, U-shaped. A little French major, with closely trimmed beard, waxed moustache, red cap, gold oak leaves, medals, bounded down to greet them. A woman stood on the top step. Anne stood still in the roadway, watching the woman. An aristocratic face ... A fine, sad face, under a white coif. She stood there, quiet, her thin hand on the rail, looking down at all the turmoil of arrival...

...

"Miss Wentworth, perhaps you'll come, too, and translate for me." Miss Perkins, the Head Nurse, excited. Miss Perkins, stout, dust-covered, agitated, being talked to by the French woman with the fine face... Not understanding... Anne shook hands with the Infirmière en Chef, followed the floating, white coif. Next her Miss Perkins trotted.

"Ah, Madame, I assure you it was only this morning," the Infirmière en Chef talked in silvery, beautiful French as they walked, "only this morning that we have heard you were coming. It was not until eleven o'clock, lacking a quarter of an hour, that the telegram was received. You will find us not well prepared. Eh, bien, c'est la guerre! But I can make you comfortable, you and your nurses. We are so content, we French, that America has at last come..." They walked down the long corridor of a wooden building. The floor was covered with sawdust, damp, littered with bits of food that fell from tables where soldiers were eating black bread, drinking red wine. Chinese, negroes, Russians, French, with arms in slings, legs ending in bandaged stumps, all eating, talking... A noise of knives and forks, scraping on tin plates ... The smell of food... The stink of unwashed bodies... "I have given the order that one should empty at once two wards," the Infirmière en Chef was saying, "I believe we shall find them in the process of being emptied... These ladies can be made quite comfortable in them. You will take your repasts with us. We shall take pleasure, my good infirmières and myself, in sharing with you and these ladies..." Anne listened hard. It went too fast to translate... 'What does she say?' Miss Perkins next her, panting...

A long, light-looking place, with whitewashed walls, tall windows. Woodwork, a pretty light blue. Black fingermarks on the light blue. French nurses, in dirty linen aprons, and long coifs, talked in shrill voices, hustling queer, little Chinamen out a door at the far end. Men

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with thin yellow legs, skinny bodies showing below their nightshirts... 'Annamites,' the Infirmière en Chef, explaining... French Indo-China...

The Chinese looked up, their quaint, brown faces puzzled. They had come to fight, they knew not why, because the Gods had willed that they should come here... The Gods had wounded them, and put them into comfortable beds. And here were the female Gods, trying to chase them, out among the trees, still in their nightshirts... A little creature turned his face toward Anne. Ageless,– might have been twenty,– might have been a hundred... He came shuffling back, hopped into his bed. A French nurse ran toward him. 'Allez! Allez! Sauve-toi!' She clapped her hands. She snatched the sheets, handed them to him, shooed him, patted his shoulder as he trotted down the long aisle... "Twenty-six of these ladies will sleep here, Mademoiselle," the Infirmière en Chef, waving her slender, well-bred hand toward the ward.

"Yes? Yes? What does she say, Miss Wentworth? This seems to be the foreign ward, doesn't it? What does she say?" Miss Perkins chattered at Anne's elbow... Anne smiled.

"She says that we can sleep here,–" she said...

...

Heat, damp and wilting. Hot uniforms of serge, buttoned round your neck... Women, on beds, weary, depressed. Anne looked at her bed. Same bed the little Annamite had been chased out of... Have to touch it sometime... To get one's clothes off... Wash, after two days of traveling, two days of dirt... Three weeks of steamers... At the end of the ward, a French nurse said, there was a place where one could wash. A small, square room with a tin trough running halfway round it... Tin trough, coated with a layer of green slime. The sewerage ran into a tank below the place, but the tank was now full. The sewerage was oozing out a little slot into a trench that ran away to the ground outside. Once a week, the French nurse explained, waving her hands, there came the Pompiers and pumped the tank out, and took it away to fertilize the vineyards. Mademoiselle knew that Bordeaux was the country of very good wine? Ah, Mademoiselle had heard,– the good wine of Médoc... The Americans would find everything about the hospital very practical, very convenient, the French nurse added. New... True, the stone building had before the war been a boys' school, but this new barrack had been built only two years. The Americans were lucky to get so new, so up-to-date an equipment as Hôpital Complémentaire Numéro 204. In it they would find all the latest improvements... Anne turned from the rouged cheeks, the reddened lips of the infirmière, and rolled her sleeves up. From the filthy trough that lined the wall, black fleas hopped...

...

To be alone... To get away from talk... From women taking clothes

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off. Hideous underwear. Fat legs and thin ones. Hairs... How could anyone ever choose to look at women's bare limbs... Anne wandered out into a wood of tall pines, stepping carefully to avoid filth. It lay everywhere,– cheating the vineyards... She found a clean place, sat down under a tree. Her head swam...

A tall Senegalese, in faded blue, came and stood near her, watching. His eyes shone black, impenetrable. Like some mild animal he stood there, gazing. Another came, and presently another. A third. A fourth. In little grunts they talked to one another. Then stood, in silence, looking at the woman... Anne got up, hunted for another clean space. Hard to find... At last, she sat down... The Senegalese followed, quietly, and stood again, gazing from their immense height. They followed her to the door of the hospital corridor when she went in. It was like this every time when you went out...

...

Very hot. If one could only be alone sometimes... Stand back, and think... Anne lay on the soft, French bed, under the long window. The sheets were linen. She watched, lazily, a little hole under the wall between the ward and the long central corridor. Through it marched a procession of tiny grey bugs. Little legs that stuck out, fanlike, on each side. Like tiny crabs, they marched on. Under Anne's bed the column divided, crawled in all directions. 'The animals came in two by two!' Through the window came the smell of sewerage from the trench outside...

"Say, girls," called Miss Austin in the bed next to Anne, "I'm perfectly certain there's somethin' bitin' me... Oh, say! I wish I was home in Fall River..."

...

Hunger. Not the kind one had at home,– there before dinner time, and afterwards gone. This hunger was always with you... The French nurses' dining hall had a shiny, waxed floor, white walls, great windows, woodwork painted pale blue. There were two long tables, with benches at each side. Horse meat, so tough you could not chew it, with a queer, strong taste. 'One accustoms oneself to it,' said the French nurse next Anne. Lentils,– little flat, round beans,– floating in pale juice. Black bread,– the ingredients must have soured before they baked it... Flies, that buzzed in through the generous, open windows. Crawled over everything... 'Ennuyeux,' the French nurse waved at the flies, 'mais quoi? C'est la guerre...' Red wine, in tall, dark bottles. Nasty, sour... 'It is necessary to put some wine in one's water,' the French nurse said. 'L'eau n'est pas bonne.' Anne drank some wine, so, in her water. Nasty... But it made you feel contented. For a few minutes you almost thought that you had had enough food...

...

Hunger, after supper. It kept you tossing on the Chinese soldier's

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bed. Bed that seemed to have something walking in it... Crawling round your feet... You pulled them up. Weariness that clutched you, pulled you away from hunger... Patterns, growing large, and larger... Big enough to roll you under... Receding... Growing smaller... So small they almost seemed to shrink to nothing... You, shrinking with them...

...

'Oh, dear! I wish I was in Fall River.' A plaintive voice in the next bed. Anne turned over. That was Miss Austin... A white mist among the trees outside the window. Faint breath of early morning freshness, tinged with the smell of sewer... A quarter to six by Anne's watch. Quarter of five, really, by pre-war time. Lots of time to sleep ... "Say, girls, I'd get up, if it wasn't for that dirty lavatory... Say, I was saying to Miss Brophy, yesterday, I was saying, I never saw a hospital with fifteen hundred patients that could get along with fifteen nurses before..." Anne kept her eyes shut tight. Don't let the woman think you're listening to her... Hunger... That was what made you feel so funny.

...

Cold water, splashing against the tin trough, against the board floor, raising goose-flesh. Making your teeth chatter. Anne gulped. Lucky she didn't mind cold water. The nurses liked hot... They wouldn't wash in a place like this... Wouldn't,– 'Say girls, it'll be a wonder if we don't all catch syphilis or gonorrhœa...' Anne held her sponge still. Gosh, could you catch things,– She stopped her washing. Gosh... Still, you had to,– Anne rushed back to her bed and threw her clothes on. Lucky you didn't mind twenty-six people seeing you stark naked. You got done, out of here, quicker than if you hid behind a nightgown like the others...

...

The stout, dark-haired serving woman shuffled down the corridor in felt slippers carrying a pail of something steaming. The smell of chicory and strong, black coffee... It touched Anne's hunger. The woman set her pail down. "Mademoiselle a bien dormi? Mademoiselle will be ready for her breakfast? She will find it in the salle-à-manger in an hour. At present," the old woman nodded, picked up her pail, "I go to give the infirmières their breakfast. These ladies breakfast always in their beds." She stumped off, into a ward hung with long, white curtains. A small girl followed her, carrying a basket full of hunks of black bread. From behind the long, white curtains, Anne heard laughter.

Breakfast. Sour black bread that didn't fill you. If one had butter,– something like that... Your stomach, craving, craving... Enormous bowl of black coffee, made with chicory. Biting your tongue as it went down. If one had just a touch of cream or sugar... Conservative,– your stomach... Miss Perkins thumbed her phrase book. "Doo

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lay?" she asked the ancient serving woman. Anne explained that it was milk that Madame wanted.

"Ah, Madame, before the war, yes!" the old woman answered. "At present, no! C'est la guerre, Madame..."

War... Anne had almost forgotten it was war, this...

...

"We've got to clean it," said Angelina. She stood, arms crossed, chin out, gold hair bobbing about her face in great strands. "The French aren't goin' to. We've got to, that's all."

"Clean what?" Anne turned over on the soft bed. Sunday morning... Temperature must be ninety... Queer how the sea still made your head swim...

"That toilet. The girls are all gettin' sick because they won't go in there." 'Clean it!' moaned Miss Austin, 'after those Chinese? Angelina, you might catch,–'

"I'm goin' to get disinfectant from the Frog operatin' room," said Angelina. "They've got as far civilized as havin' the operatin' room clean,–"

...

Along the edge of the woods, past the ward ends, they carried the slopping pail of disinfectant. It smelled queer, made your mouth taste funny... Two Senegalese followed, sniffing. "You see they have tanks under these places." Angelina pointed with her free hand. "And they have that little channel there, see, for it to come out through when the tanks are too full. Oo-o-o-o! Look at that ditch." Anne stepped across it. Foul stench... Nausea, twisting your gullet... Perspiration, running... "This one's ours." They stepped in...

...

The place stank. Angelina set the pail down, bump, on the slippery, dank floor. Fished out the floating brushes. She held one toward Anne, laughing. "Say, you do look funny..." Aprons, pinned up. Heads, wrapped in towels. Anne took her brush. Dipped it in disinfectant, stood,– Got to bend over... Touch it... War, this... Nothing romantic about war...

She bent. That foul stench... Brown slime, oozing. Your stomach,– God, your breakfast,– But you hadn't had any breakfast... Only chicory and half a piece of black bread... Nothing to,– She scrubbed. Small, shining, black things hopping at you, bouncing. Angelina bending over, scrubbing. Scrub furiously... Attack it... Kill them... Bright tin under where you scraped the ooze off... Fleas, like demons... Now and then one of them fell into the black pit below there. Could fleas swim? What were those things the nurses said you might catch? The disinfectant biting your throat... Fight... Your clothes, soaking themselves in perspiration, in slime, in disinfectant... Throw it... Keep it moving... Sweat, dripping off your eyebrows.

...

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"My goodness!" Miss Perkins stopped in the doorway, her mouth open. Why, these girls had a pail, and they were throwing water every which way... Laughing... Soaked from head to,– Odor of chlorinated soda... Why, they'd made this place,– well anyway the fleas had gone, floor not so slimy that you'd fall on it as you did last night,– Hadn't dared ask the nurses to,– Her nurses hadn't come to France to,– Had meant to speak to the Major about it next time,– if the Major ever,– The Major living at a fine hotel in Bordeaux,– Why, that was Miss Wentworth, the Major's secretary,– not a nurse at all! Niece of Caleb F. Huntington, Trustee of the Hospital at home,– Miss Wentworth on her hands and knees there, cleaning out the,– where the Chinese,– Heavens... Perspiration dripping from her temples... Miss Wentworth straightened up.

'It's a great war!' she was saying, laughing...

...

They took their clothes off, and threw water at each other. Watching the soapsuds melt on the damp, clean floor. How could anything be really clean with that stinking pit beneath it... Human skin, anyway, would come clean... Even after you'd touched,– Angelina, pink and white, and beautifully curved, against the dark walls... They walked out into the ward, put on their wrappers, lay on their beds. Hot... Mary Denton came in. "Say, girls, the Chaplain's havin' a service there out under the trees," said Mary Denton.

"Is he?" said Anne...

...

Another day. Heavens... Only one day gone... Miss Austin, in the next bed, groaning, yawning. 'Say girls, I wish I was in Fall River...' Angelina, whispering, four beds down. 'Say, Murphy got up at four so's to dress before anyone saw her. She's religious, Murphy...' Anne got up. Cold water, splashing on the tin trough, down on the board floor. Well, anyway, it was clean now... "If you haven't got any modesty at all," said Angelina, "you can get real nice and clean in this place..."

"What's the use of being modest?" Anne said.

...

The office, in the administration building. A faint, sick uneasiness about your stomach... The Master Hospital Sergeant, calmly telling two soldiers how to sweep the room out. The Master Hospital Sergeant, quite at home here... 'First thing to do is to get the place clean,' he was saying. 'No hurry, boys. What we want,' he paused, 'is to get it done right...'

The Major and the Adjutant, beaming, pleasant, arrived in an ambulance from their hotel in the city. Anne went into the Adjutant's office with some orders. "Morning!" The Adjutant pushed his cap back, looked out the window. He smiled, blandly. Whale of a good dinner last night at the Chapon Fin... Here was Miss Wentworth...

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Château Yquem, they called that... Wine of Médoc... 'The Sergeant Major thought you ought to see these,' Miss Wentworth, saying... Damn the orders... Tonight he'd go to a place they called the Perdrix ... Said it was better... Hell, a fellow couldn't eat a better dinner,– "Yes, yes, I ought to see 'em." He held his hand out. G.O. Six, Prophylactic Stations. Got the prophylactic station started,– five treatments last night... G.O. Nine, Officers' personal reports... Tonight, going to try Haut-Brion... 'The Sergeant Major says we ought to file them numerically, not under subjects. When you want to find one, you read the file right through from start to finish,' Miss Wentworth, still talking about the damned old orders...

"Yes, sure!" Orders, that was... You used to be an obstetrician... Now a surgeon... Adjutant,– probably never see a patient... Didn't matter... Food really couldn't be better at the Perdrix... Château Yquem,– must remember that name... A God damn surgeon... who'd never touch a scalpel... Hell, what did *he* care?

"Well, better let him file 'em his own way." The Adjutant tipped his chair back... "It's a great war!"

...

Evening. Anne sat on the steps of the barrack with Miss Brophy. It would be pleasant here if one weren't always hungry. Horse meat... The hunger, growing... Worse, after each meal... French soldier patients climbed through a hole in the stucco wall beyond the pine trees. "Don't it beat the Dutch," said Miss Brophy, "lettin' patients out o' bed when they feel like it, and crawl out and jazz about the town..."

"Do you suppose the hospital knows they go?"

"Of course they know it," Brophy snorted. "Don't they let every one of them keep a box under his bed, full of old pieces of cheese, and wine and black bread? Say, this hospital don't give the patients any breakfast. Each man that isn't too sick just hauls out his box, and has a little cheese and red wine. I watched 'em today. Say, how do you suppose that Médecin Chef thinks those boxes get filled up? And smell,– my God! They'd had the windows shut all night, and twenty-six of 'em in there,– never been washed. These Frog nurses have never been known to wash a patient. Oh, no! They don't bother with anything like that! Just go in in the morning, and open the windows, and get the orderly to pull the stiffs out."

"The stiffs?"

"Patients die in the night, you know, most always. Two or three o'clock in the morning is the bad time. These Frogs don't bother with night nurses. Say, Miss Wentworth, these women here aren't nurses, anyway. But they sure do know how to give the patients a good time!" Miss Brophy laughed. "It's not too hard to see what kind o' women they are, –" Miss Brophy shoved over to make room for Angelina.

"Yes," said Angelina. "I was watchin' 'em do dressing on the wards

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this morning. Say, Anne, d'ju know what they did with those old, pussy dressings? Just flopped 'em up and tossed 'em out the window. There's a pile of 'em out there a foot high, right between the wards. No wonder that this place smells,–"

"And then they take new dressings," said Brophy, "and put on about four miles more than they need. Say, if one of us wasted dressings like that, wouldn't we catch it?"

"And my mother, rollin' bandages at home!" said Angelina. Anne looked out among the trees. Aunt Anna, Rosalind, her mother, rolling bandages at Downham... Downham... The parlor fire... Comfortable beds... Bathrooms... Tea,– Stop! Dangerous, to let your thoughts go... "And flies," said Angelina. "Say, there was one man with a hemorrhage,– flies crawlin' all over him, and stickin' in it..."

"Good evening, ladies." Little Drennan, stepping through the pine woods. His small, pale face softened in a warm smile. "Say, you girls had oughter see the Hôtel de Bayonne, wine with every,–"

"I suppose the Major's having a swell time in there," snarled Brophy. "*He* don't care what happens to us out here. Parkin' us with the niggers and the vermin and the Chinese! Sewerage all over! Just so *he's* comfortable, *he* don't care!"

"Well, it ain't me that's doin' it, is it?" said Drennan. "They say the Frogs'll be outa here in a couple of months, and we'll take the thing over..."

"Yes, and he'll be lucky if he don't have the nurses all down with diarrhœa before that," said Miss Brophy, "livin' on horse meat. Gee, but I'm hungry..."

"Say, girls," said Drennan,– these girls *was* gettin' a raw deal,– "come out to that little caife down the road and have somethin'." Brophy rose, smoothing her uniform. Anne hesitated. There wasn't anything to eat in the 'little caife,'– she'd tried it... Angelina holding her hands out, pulling you up... After all, human beings were,– 'Coming?' said Drennan.

"Sure she is," said Angelina...

...

Anne walked up the long corridor toward the office. French soldiers were sweeping up the sawdust. In it, bits of food, from three days' meals. Strewing fresh sawdust, to catch today's, tomorrow's. Patients standing about, indolent, looking at her. Relieved, it seemed to have anything new to look at... A group of Russians stood there at the corner, in flat-fronted, grey-green blouses, loose trousers, high black boots. A man turned, looked at Anne,– Great, dark eyes under long, upturned lashes. A bandage, flat across his face where once his nose was. Below it,– a round hole that gaped in a smooth expanse of redness. God. Anne turned her face away. She drew a long breath. Mustn't do that... Mustn't be a coward... Must look back at the man... and say 'good morning'... Those eyes,– the man must once

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have been a handsome creature... Anne looked up at him. A haunting horror in the dark eyes. Tears, welling up. Anne flushed. God, she had hurt him... Had let him see the hideous monster that he was now... Must keep on looking at him... Must smile... See just the eyes, and not that round, unclosing mouth... "Bonjour!" she tried to smile, tried to be pleasant... The Russian lowered the long lashes over his dark eyes, put his hands in his pockets, wandered away...

"Good God!" said Anne...

...

'It was their own fault.' Angelina slammed the horse meat down before Miss Conroy. 'Don't talk to me about these stupid French boobs,–' 'I never saw a prettier skin graft,' said Miss Conroy; 'there isn't a surgeon in this unit who,–' 'Yes. An' what's the use of doin' a good operation if you're goin' to let the patient swallow his tongue? It was their own fault!'

"What was their fault, Angelina?" asked Anne.

"Why one of those French operatin' cases,– Say, when *we* send a patient back from the operatin' room, we send somebody with 'em. Lots of times we make a hole through the tongue and put a string through. These Frogs did a dandy skin graft on a man this morning, and on the way back to the ward, they let him go up,–" 'Go where?' "To purgatory, or wherever it is they go to,–"

"But it was a beautiful operation," said Miss Conroy...

...

"Say, Anne, come to dinner with me and a poet?" asked Angelina. "Engineer officer, he is, from down at Paullac. Austin and I met him in the Palais Julien. An awful queer bird, but anyway, he'll get us a good feed."

"Well,–" Anne hesitated. You didn't come to war to dine with poets... Still, Hunger, always pestering your inside... A growing nausea toward horse meat and lentils... "Yes, I'll come..."

The Poet greeted Miss McCarthy as 'Angelina darling...' A lanky creature, whose uniform hung on him as if he'd been a scarecrow. Washy blue eyes, a face wrinkled, and sallow. Raising one eyebrow as he held his hand out. Anne's hand stiffened as she shook his. Too late to go back... 'Meet Lieutenant Butts,' a heavy, stolid creature. 'Pleased to meet you, I am sure, Miss,–' An army automobile was waiting... The head waiter met them at the restaurant door. A large place painted white and gold, with mirrors, white damask on the tables, American and French officers, eating, talking. Girls, talking, laughing. So, the Americans already knew girls? 'The table is all prepared, mon Lieutenant,' the head waiter, bowing. He pointed to the stairway. Anne went. She didn't like it. Angelina giggled. 'Say, what's he up to?' A small room, gold and white, blue curtains, mirrors... A table set with silverware and many glasses... "There now! All to ourselves!" The Poet rubbed his hands. "Angelina darling,

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take your hat off. I want to see that golden hair..." He made a pass at Angelina with a long, thin hand.

"Orders are never to wear one part of your uniform without the other," said Angelina. Butts roared. The Poet turned to him, raising one eyebrow. Anne watched. Wished she hadn't come here... Better to be hungry...

"Well, Miss Wentworth, if Killarney here won't take her hat off, let's show her that New England isn't afraid to."

"Thanks. It's comfortable on." Anne sat down. Better talk, pleasantly, until the food came... Dozens of little dishes on a great platter. Mushrooms. The hearts of artichokes. Anchovies. Sardines. Caviar. Bits of sausage. Eggs in yellow dressing. Grated cucumber, and radish. A sensation under your tongue... Anne ate. Glad she'd come, now... Couldn't help it... Hadn't eaten anything decent for such a long time... The waiter, bringing Château-Lafitte, with cobwebs on the bottle. 'Ah, I have seen the very vines it grows on,' the Poet, clasping his hands. 'It comes from Paullac. Wine, Angelina darling?' Anne sipped it. The sweetness of the south... The mellowness of France, distilled in this stuff... Resolutely she set her glass down. Better not take it... Not take any... Safer... The waiter knocked at the door, came in with soup. Funny, he seemed to think he had to knock each time he came in... When he went out, he set his tray down on a little table, and closed the door behind him. "Leave it open! Open!" called Angelina. The waiter ran his head back through a narrow crack. "Oui! Oui! Madame," he said, and closed it quickly.

Food came. Food fit for princes. Purée St.-Germain. Artichaux Lyonnais. Cêpes à la Bordelaise. Poulet rôti. Salade. From a great, dark bottle, the waiter pouring champagne. "I'm enjoyin' this Goddam war," said the Poet, "I do' mind sayin'..." Butts roared, again. Anne looked at him. His face was flushed with wine now... If girls didn't drink, the men were bound to get more... Anne and Angelina ate. Delicious food... If you could only eat it by yourself, without these creatures... What if they got drunk? What if you had to walk out on the street with drunken,— And you might meet the Major... These men mustn't drink the whole of that great bottle... Something must be done right off to stop them... The waiter, pouring champagne. Anne pushed her water goblet toward him. Would hold more than the wine glass... "Non! Ici," she said. He poured the golden liquid. Angelina looked across at Anne, her blue eyes widening. Anne pulled her glass back, near the table's edge, and casually, with her elbow, tipped it over. 'Oh, Heavens! All on the floor! What a pity!' He poured Anne more wine. She left it, standing. Wished she'd stayed at the hospital and eaten horse meat... The Poet's hand, closing over Angelina's on the table. 'Thanks, that belongs to me,' said Angelina. She drew her hand back. Men, growing maudlin... The Poet, raising one eyebrow...

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"Gonna write a poem 'bout a New England girl that's s-s-stiff 'n' virtuous. Stiff old Anne," he driveled, "stiff old Anne." In Angelina's eyes, a merry twinkle... They both laughed. The man howled. Anne wished they had not come here... It wasn't funny... Tiny ices, size of a fifty-cent piece. Coffee... Little cakes,– very special,– M. le Lieutenant would be good enough not to mention them outside... 'L'addition,'– Much mumbling... Three hundred-franc notes thrown on the table. Bowings, scrapings. The stairs at last. Thank God... The Poet, tripping, catching the banister as he came down...

"Let's take the tram," said Anne. "We have to be back at ten..." The poet shouted for a taxi. Someone running... A taxi puffing up to the restaurant and stopping. 'Hôpital Complémentaire Numéro 204,' Anne said to the driver. The Poet leaned over to him, holding the cab unsteadily.

"L'Auberge de Guillaume, M-M-Médoc," he said. "Oui, oui, M-M-Médoc..." "Oui, oui!" The taxi man's eyes glimmered. "Say, what's he sayin' to him?" whispered Angelina.

"We must go straight to the Hospital," said Anne.

"Aren't goin' to the old hospital," said the Poet. "Goin' out to Guillaume's. Goin' to see where the lovely red wine comes from." They were in the cab now. The Poet was feeling for Angelina's hand. She let him hold it. 'It'll keep him quiet.' Butts, sitting opposite, felt likewise. Angelina had two hands. Thank God... Anne leaned out the forward window, addressed the driver. Blue-nosed... A brigand... "Nous irons," she said slowly, clearly, "directement à l'Hôpital, n'est-ce-pas?" "Demand of the Lieutenant," snapped the driver. Anne drew a ten franc note out of her pocket. She let it flutter before the man's nose. "When we arrive at the hospital, I am going to give you this. And if we do not arrive, I am going to denounce you to the police," she said. "This is the corner. Turn!" The taxi turned. Anne settled back into her corner. Thank God for Angelina, holding their filthy hands there in the darkness... 'Such a nice li'l' Inn, Angy, dear,' the Poet was saying. 'Hello, New England! Have a good time with your nose in the fresh air?'

The taxi stopped. Bump, bump. There, thank God, was the guardhouse. Familiar buildings. Familiar smell of sewerage. They jumped out. Little Saunders on guard, coming to meet them. Thank God... 'No, don't get out. Oh, no, the guard will take us.' The two girls walked down the gravel path toward the building.

"Say Anne, it's a great war!" said Angelina...

...

The long corridor was dark, save for one dim light. Anne and Angelina scuffed through the dirty sawdust. The doors that opened on the wards were all shut. A woman's stout figure came toward them, walking slowly. From one hand dangled a lantern, in which burned a candle. "That's the night nurse," whispered Angelina, "they only

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have one." The woman padded softly from one door to another, opening them, putting her head in, closing them, going on. One never saw this woman in the daytime. A night owl, flitting softly... 'Bonsoir, Mesdames,' her deep voice. "Vous et eesy toojoor dans le nooy?" asked Angelina, eager.

"Comment, Madame?" Anne explained. The woman put her hand up to her ear to listen. "Ah, Mesdames," answered the old woman. She set down her lantern, gesturing with the freed hand. "I am here and I am there. I have the eye open on each room, in waiting for the dawn. Comme ils souffrent, les malades, pendant la nuit![1] Sometimes they die. But the hospital is large, fifteen hundred blessés. One cannot always look in at every ward during the night time. I am not more young. I do not walk as fast as you do. And sometimes I fall with sleep. Mais, que voulez-vous? C'est la guerre! Bonsoir, Mesdames!"

The dim light of the candle bobbed away, slowly. Now and again the old woman stopped, opened a ward door, leaned her shoulder against the door jamb, stuck her white coif into the darkness beyond. Then quietly she shut the door and went on...

...

The nurses' ward was dark, and full of sleeping women. Corsets, dropping with a clatter, as you brushed past. Moonlight, falling in square patches on the floor between the white beds. Anne undressed in the strange, mottled darkness. Nice to feel, for once, no one was watching... Bed. She tossed. The evening had not been pleasant. War, not at all what you expected... No danger... Nothing exciting, thrilling... Just a gnawing hunger,– unless you ate with poets. A lack of chairs, a lack of privacy and quiet,– Boredom... And you might stay here twelve years,– A noise,– Anne raised her head. A scratching noise outside the window... Moonlight shining against the ground glass that filled the sash below the open window. Against it, a man's head, silhouetted. A hand stealing over the edge of the ground glass. The hand was black. And after it, a huge arm, a body, hauling itself up... Anne crawled out of bed, pounded Miss Conroy. "Look." She pointed. "What'll we do about him?" The hand stayed motionless. Like an animal, the man clung, frozen...

"Oh," said Miss Conroy, calmly. "One of those Sudanese. Thinks he'll come in, does he? Next time, son, wait till you get invited." She and Anne loosed the black fingers, pushed the great arm up, outward. The man jumped down outside. 'Say,' Miss Austin rolled over in the semi-darkness, 'I wish I was in Fall River...'

"Go to sleep," Anne said...

...

Evening, after a day of doing nothing. Anne and Miss Austin sat at the table, writing letters in the nurses' mess hall. Miss Brophy and

[1] 'How they suffer, the sick ones, during the night!'

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the Quartermaster were playing checkers. The Russian patients howled outside the window. Drunk... They did it often...

"Lemme at those fellers!" Drennan loosened his Sam Browne belt, and threw his blouse off... Bad enough to play checkers with this woman,– that tantalizing pale face, red hair, red lips... Gave a man, somehow, a desire to drag her out by her red hair and,– The Russians would do. Just let him get his fists into them Goddam Russians ... Miss Brophy dashed to one door, locked it, took the key out, turned to the other. "Here, if you're going to lock up, let me out first." Anne and Miss Austin slid through. They heard the key twist in the lock behind them...

Drennan raged. Tried to climb out the window. Too high for him... "Lemme out!" he shouted to Miss Brophy. "Damn 'em! I'll kill 'em!" She put her hands down gently on his shoulders: "The Russians will be all right," she said, "they do this every evening, we're used to it." She patted him. Just kids,– men... The Irish in him, melting... His eyes... Another look there... Good God...

Drennan grabbed her, kissed her... Wanted,– wanted... Her mouth, avoiding his... Dodging... He found it... Those red lips... Christ! Why should this woman be reminding him of Maggie? His arms loosened...

A knock. Someone at the door. Miss Brophy walked slowly over and unlocked it. Wished they'd let you alone... The fool would have kissed you again... You could have,– Miss Perkins. Good God.

"Why did you lock the door, Miss Brophy?" the Head Nurse asked. Miss Brophy must have been frightened of those noisy Russians,– why, there was the Quartermaster... Gracious, if only she didn't have on that ugly wrapper... The Captain seemed to have his blouse off...

Miss Brophy stood there. Have to say something to the woman... A good soul, Miss Perkins,– trusting... "Afraid the Captain was goin' to fight," she stammered. Her legs shaking...

"Oh, I see." Miss Perkins hurried off. Too bad the Captain should see her hair in these curl papers... "Wise of Miss Brophy," she said.

...

Great, blue trucks lined up outside the office. Anne stood with the orderly and the Master Hospital Sergeant looking out the window. Annamites and Sudanese, piling into the camions, jabbering, waving their arms... "Well, we're rid of three truck-loads of 'em." The Master Hospital Sergeant picked his teeth, slowly. "Looks as if we might get this hospital for ourselves one of these days. Say, if the U.S. army'd been as slow as these folks, we'd still be in Cuby!"

"It's a great war," said the orderly, turning from the window...

...

The rue de Saint-Ignace, powdered with white dust. Along it Anne and Angelina walked toward the city. 'Américaines!' A Frenchman turned to look at them as they strode by. Pretty, that blonde one...

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'Américaines?' A wounded poilu at the corner raised his eyebrows. Sacré nom d'un chien, quelle belle toison blonde... 'I luff you,' said the vendeur d'huîtres beside his wagon, as Angelina's scarlet cape flashed past him. 'Jolie, la blonde...'

"Say, aren't they dirty dogs?" said Angelina...

...

The rue Sainte-Catherine, filled with many people. People wandering, looking in shop windows, talking, with gestures. Among them Anne and Angelina, walking slowly. "Say, aren't we having fun?" Angelina squeezed Anne's arm... "I didn't come over here to have fun," said Anne. "Yes, but you can't help havin' it..." Angelina stopped before a window filled with embroidered linens. "Oh, say, my mother'd,–" 'Jolie Américaine!' Two Russian officers stopping, looking at her. "Come on," said Anne. They walked, arm in arm, among the crowds. Shops... Shops...

"Why there's Sam Haley." Angelina's hand gave Anne's a quick squeeze. "He's one of our enlisted men, you know. He's lived next me at home since we were kids,–" A tall, full-lipped man, with curly brown hair that stuck out under his overseas cap. Next him, a French girl,– reddened lips, blue paint on her eyelids,– clinging to his arm... 'Américain? Bon? Pas bon?' she was saying... Sam Haley turned his face away. He flushed a dull, deep crimson as he walked past. 'Quoi? Riche?' The French girl, talking... "Say, what's got into Sam? He won't speak to me!" Angelina turned and looked back at him. "Maybe he thinks I'd be mad that he'd go with a French girl. Say, if they won't let the soldiers talk to us, Anne, who *are* they goin' to talk to?" She hooked her arm through Anne's. They walked on. "Do you know, Anne," Angelina's baby face grew solemn, "Evans told me the city authorities got two hundred English-speaking prostitutes here specially, when they heard that we were coming. Say, Anne, aren't they dirty dogs, these Frenchmen?" 'Jolie!' said a French officer, who passed them... 'Vrai?' A woman at his elbow jerked him as he turned to look at Angelina. 'Bah!'

Anne and Angelina strolled on, slowly. The Place des Quinconces. Restaurants,– people sitting at tables on the sidewalks. French officers and Russians. Women. People talking, laughing, sipping from small glasses. A sense of leisure... An air of quiet pleasure... The Quai Louis XVIII. Great statue of Montaigne. Two American officers dawdling by the statue, with two French girls. Gosh,– Anne stopped. It was Captain Boutelier, and Enneking, the dentist. The French girls, talking to them slowly, with many gestures: 'Promenade?' Anne pulled Angelina's elbow. 'Couchez?' Better go back...

"Say, I haven't noticed any English-speaking ones," said Angelina.

...

Hideous stench, coming through the window of the office. The Pompiers were out there, pumping out the tanks under the latrines.

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The joints of all their pipes leaked slightly. At each joint, the ground was damp with sewerage... Trucks, snorting. Anne jumped up from desk, looked out the window. American soldiers on the two trucks, dusty... A captain, six feet tall, square shoulders, a campaign hat tipped over a lean sunburned face, jumped down off the first one, bounded up the curved steps. "That's liable to be the Engineers," said the Sergeant. "There's going to be a company of 'em here, a-diggin' sewers." The Engineers were already unloading lumber.

"Sewers wouldn't do any harm round here," said Anne.

...

"Gee, I had a swell time just now." Mahoney, the office orderly grinned. "This here Engineer Captain, Miss Wentworth, he's some boy! Say, I took a message to him from the Major just now. The Cap'n, he was standin' in the chow line, he lines up with a mess kit, with his men, that guy does. I salutes. 'Sir,' I says to him, 'the Major's compliments to Captain Thrall, and he will have that lumber in the front yard piled in an orderly fashion before six o'clock.' The Cap'n laughs. 'Orderly,' he says, calm like, 'Cap'n Thrall's compliments to the Major, and tell him to go to the devil.'" Mahoney sat down, howling. "Say," he said, "say, you ought to have seen the old boy's face when I,–"

"This Cap'n's responsible to his own Colonel," drawled the Master Hospital Sergeant. "The Major'd ought to have known that..."

...

Afternoon sunshine, splashing into the long cloister that ran along the garden. Shining from the smooth leaves of the magnolia... Anne walked from the office to her supper. Ahead of her went Mary Denton, a trig, white figure, flashing in and out of sunshine. A demure, gentle person, Mary Denton... Delicate, and pretty... Coming toward her a great hulking figure with broad shoulders... Dust on the shoulders... Dust on his boots, on his dark leather puttees... Captain Thrall stopped in front of Mary Denton. He took his campaign hat off, held it across his breast, looked down across it. A woman... A damned pretty little woman... Hell of a while since he'd seen decent women... "Can you tell me where the Quartermaster's store is?"

Mary looked at the trim toes of her white slippers. Why, this man could pick her up and carry her, like a baby, if he wanted... Such a big man... "It's,–" Mary pointed with her slender finger as she told him. Thrall did not listen. A woman's voice,– talking American... God, how long since you had heard that! As if you were a kid again... As if you were home... 'Do you think you'll find it?' she was asking...

"No," said Thrall. "You come along and show me..."

...

Evening. A golden sun that touched the vivid grass, bathed yellowing vineyards. Anne and Angelina walked out a narrow road into the country. Across a deep ditch, a field, emerald green, yellow trees. On

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the other side, sloping away, a gold-brown vineyard. The sky, blue, with white and purple clouds, gilt-edged. Against it the two round towers of an ancient castle. "Like-Maxfield Parrish," Anne said. Angelina laughed. Anne was a queer one...

"They put Sam on pickin' up these old rotten bandages between the wards this mornin'," said Angelina. "The boys picked up ten barrels of 'em, all full of flies and maggots. Sam passed out." Angelina laughed. "They had to get a stretcher."

"In that castle there," Anne pointed to the two towers that showed above the tree tops, "lived Edward, the Black Prince, when the English owned this country round here."

"Say, Anne, you do know the queerest things," said Angelina...

...

'Well, you saved one Frog for his country, Conroy,' said Mary Denton. Anne looked up at her across the table. Mary sat smiling. Had not Captain Thrall taken her four times in town to dinner? Did he not go walking with her every evening? She, who had always been so small, so quiet... This great man, whom everybody would have liked to please, had,– 'What happened, Conroy?' inquired Angelina. 'I was observing in the operating room,' said Miss Conroy. 'One of these French nurses was giving a patient ether. Pouring it in, she was,– I had a hunch she'd kill him,–' 'You certainly held your tongue well,' said Mary Denton. Conroy,– official etherizer of the unit,– you didn't interfere with things when Conroy was there... 'What could I do?' said Conroy. 'He was her patient. I wasn't goin' to say anythin' until she asked me. But believe me, Angelina, that patient was black. He was goin' up in just about one minute. Then she turns to me, and she says somethin'...' 'And you ought to have seen Conroy push her out of the way!' laughed Mary Denton, 'the creature just fell backwards off her high heels. "Get outa here!" says Conroy, "le' me do this."' 'I and Mary had to work a half an hour to bring the bird back,' added Miss Conroy, 'but you can't blame these women. They don't know any better...'

"They've been at war three years," said Anne. "They–"

"The French are dirty dogs!" said Angelina.

...

A book. Wonderful to see a book... Anne fingered it. Another mind there, between the shabby covers. A History of Southern France,– Greenbaum had found it somewhere, lent it to her. Written in English. She carried it toward a little summer house in the park. Hard to find anywhere to read... No chairs except the camp chairs in the office... If you lay on your bed, you had to hear a dozen nurses talking... To read... To read in English... Anne's pace quickened. Before this, she had bought herself a French book. You couldn't sail ahead, somehow, in French books... You wanted English... Wanted to feel your mind free, leaping forward... Was there anyone, in all the world, who

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was still reading, thinking? Or were they all exiled,– away from chairs and bookshelves... Anne stopped. The darn summer house had someone in it. Somebody sitting on the broad marble bench, his back against the grapevine. Enormous shoulders. Against one of them a nurse's white cap, leaning. The man's great arm round the body of the woman. Hand, patting her hip, slowly. Anne tiptoed back. It was Thrall and Mary Denton...

She lay down on the ground behind a big bush. The ground was clean, now,– all the night-soil removed by Private Haley and the others. She opened her book, began at the first chapter. The Romans in Gaul. Was Thrall going to marry Mary Denton? Was that why Mary's eyes had shone so bright at meal-times? Queer thing how these women wanted men so... Even Anne wanted officers to take her out to dinner... Just hunger... Or was it a new kind of hunger? Roman amphitheatre at Nîmes. The Maison Carrée. Whatever the feeling was, something fundamental... An urge inside you that you couldn't explain... The Palais Julien at Bordeaux,– Burdigala, the capital of Acquitania Secunda, two thousand years back. Mary Denton did not know this man at all... That did not matter. Light, growing too dim for reading... Somebody coming down the long, straight pathway. Anne edged behind her bush. Thrall swinging the hand of Mary Denton. Pulling her to him. Putting his great arm, very gently, round her. Putting his face down... The arm tightening, crushing the slim, white body... Queer look in the man's eyes,– Gosh...

...

"Anne, let's go talk to Sam. He promised to save some eats out of the Major's mess for us," said Angelina. "The tent's just down there." The two girls made their way across the brown grass. "I want to get Sam to come to Mass tomorrow," said Angelina. "I told Sam's mother I'd look after him on this trip," Angelina, solemn. "Sometimes I think he's slippin'..." Anne did not want to talk to Private Haley,– but there was Hunger, and Private Haley waited on the officers' mess, where they had vegetables, and bread, and even olives,– queer feeling under your tongue,– you couldn't go on eating horse meat forever... You ate less, each day, and still the French stayed. Sam, and another soldier in the doorway of a brown tent, grinning at them... "Sam Haley," Angelina shook her finger at him, "are you sure you're behavin' yourself as you should?" Sam's eyes fell to the grass.

"Aw, I'm all right, Angy. Say, Miss Wentworth," he looked at Anne, "do you know how to make out one of them rigamaroles for me to transfer to the Air Service? I didn't come over to be a cook in this man's army."

"I made one out for Mahoney last week," said Anne. She heard a cough behind her. She turned. The Major. His face growing purple... 'Are you aware, Miss McCarthy, that nurses are not allowed to talk to the enlisted men except in line of duty?' the Major shouted.

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Angelina smiled: 'I was just tellin' the boys to come to mass tomorrow, Major.' 'Ahem! We call them the "enlisted men," Miss McCarthy,' the Major's cheek muscles, twitching... 'Oh,' Angelina threw the yellow head back, laughing, 'say, Major, is *that* what you call them?' A laugh...

"It didn't take him long to get away from here, did it?" Anne said...

...

The sewers were made. The Engineers were going. Captain Thrall strode into the office to say good-bye. "Be pushing up the daisies in a week or two, Miss Wentworth!" The big man laughed. "Say, Sergeant, where do I get one of those blanks to allot my pay on?" 'The Quartermaster, Sir.' The Sergeant opened the door that led to Drennan's office. The Captain strode through. Anne watched him standing before Drennan's desk, the blank in his hand. "I put my wife's name here, do I? Send it to,—" he bent over, his big hands clumsy.

"I'll fill it in for you on the typewriter, Sir," Drennan's clerk said. Do anything for this guy... He'd told the God damn Major where to get off... The Captain stood over the clerk's desk, dictating, slowly: "Mrs. Sarah E. Thrall, 6 Clark Street, Evansville, Kentucky," he said...

...

Outside the window, the Engineers were climbing onto trucks, their packs on their backs. Little Saunders, raking the drive, stopped and looked up. Hell, he wished he,— Say, there was that Captain o' theirs in that there vestibule a-kissin' one o' the nurses... Hell, they wouldn't let the Goddam soldiers kiss the nurses... The Captain ran down the front steps, stood by the first truck. On the front steps stood Mary Denton, a small, frail, white figure, all alone there... Anne went out from the office, and stood with her. Together they waved. Tears in Mary Denton's eyes as she turned back. "He's coming back to marry me, Miss Wentworth!" She pulled a handkerchief out of her pocket.

"Is he?" said Anne.

...

Anne stopped in a French ward with a message from the Major. He wanted to know which ward would be the next one empty... "Ah, Mademoiselle!" The Infirmière en Chef came toward her, with her hand out. It was as though you were arriving at a party... "Come," she said, "come to see my Little One, here. It will make him feel gay." She led the way, her long coif floating out behind her. Afternoon sun, shining through open windows, touching light blue woodwork. Over the beds, chintz coverings with flowers on them... A table in the center cluttered with dirty dishes... Flies, buzzing... Above the sticky dishes, sun touching a great bunch of scarlet dahlias... Between two

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beds a poilu was singing a little song and dancing. A French nurse, beating time with the high white heel of her slipper,

'Hardi, les gars!
Ne vous désolez pas...'

Anne stopped. Two empty sleeves flapped as the man's feet moved...

'Quand on est Zouave
Faut être brave...'

Men sitting, with bandaged arms and legs, jerked their heads in tune, smiling... The nurse laughing, tossing her head back.

'On n'a pas chaud,
Mais, Dieu Merci,
Chez les Boches,
Il fait froid aussi...'

"Bravo!" cried the French nurse. Those who had hands, clapped them. Anne clapped, with them.

"Dans cette salle sont les grands blessés," [1] the Infirmière en Chef, explaining. "We try our utmost that everything here should be always cheerful. The Marquise de Chasteigner, our neighbor, has sent us these coverlets, these flowers. And I give always to these men our most gay nurses. That the atmosphere should be always joyous, that is the important thing, is it not?" She led Anne toward a small, dark man in the corner. The man had lost two legs, one hand... "Here is a lady, mon Petit, who is going to talk to you,–"

"Bonsoir, Madame!" The small, dark man held out his left hand. Anne smiled. Tears in her eyes. What could she say... God...

...

"Come see my ward!" Angelina stopped Anne in the corridor as she walked back. "See, we got it all fixed..." The place had been scrubbed, whitewashed. A smell of linoleum and fresh wax. Battleship-grey paint had hidden the light blue woodwork, and covered the white wall up to your shoulder. The wooden floor shone, new, brown linoleum running down the middle,– at each side tall beds, covered with dark, grey blankets. Each blanket forming the same, slanting angle at the corner... Grey screens in the window... The place clean, ugly, American, efficient... "Say, doesn't it look nice?" said Angelina. "Y-es." Anne hesitated. Some spirit,– something, had left the place, along with the blue woodwork...

"All we lack now," said Angelina, "is patients. Say, who'da thought we'd be in France two months before we got a patient?"

...

Night. Someone stealing in next your bed, standing... Anne opened her eyes. A soldier. Putting his hand on Miss Conroy's humped-up shoulder. Miss Conroy, groaning, sticking her head up, dishevelled,

[1] 'In this room are the very badly wounded.'

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sleepy. 'They want you in the operatin' room...' the man said. Conroy, sitting up, bare legs, feeling for her slippers, putting her clothes on quickly. White uniform, just so... White cap... 'Glory be! An operatin' case at last,' she whispered...

"Say, I wisht I was on Surgical!" whined Miss Austin...

...

The patient's name was Suarek. Anton Suarek of the Engineers. Anton had gone to the United States from Poland. Six months before, he had lost his job in the silk mills of Paterson, New Jersey. After five days of hunger, he had wandered past a recruiting sign in the City Hall Park. Suarek had joined up with the Engineers. They fed you... How could he tell the army would go to France? Suarek had found himself, unknowing what the racket was about, in a great camp south of Bordeaux. On his first pay day, Suarek went in town with some others to a little drink shop near the Quai de la Gouys. The drink was served by Ernestine, a French girl whose middle-aged husband tended switches at the railroad station near by. Suarek kept his eye on Ernestine, her high bust under her black apron, her smooth, black hair... Ernestine slammed the drinks down before the soldiers, shouting at them hoarsely... 'Dix francs... Tiens...'

"Come on, you God damn son of a ....." The other soldiers shouted to Suarek. "If we're gonna get back to the God damned camp, we gotta hike..." Suarek's evil, pale blue eye was watching Ernestine. He kicked the iron leg of the wine-spattered table and sat there staring ... "Oh, you're gonna stay, are you?" said the others. "Well, you been in the God damn guard-house all last week. You know how you like it, you ..." Evil words... They dodged out, into darkness...

Ernestine pulled change from the pocket of her apron, began to count it on the table under the oil lamp. Suarek gulped his cognac. He choked a bit. Ernestine started, looking up across her shoulder. The man's blear eyes leered down into her face. Her eye on him, she drew away, backward, groping for the counter. "Laisse-moi!" she hissed. "Fiche-moi le camp dans la rue![1] You will find there the kind of women you search!" He had her by the shoulders, by the throat, his great, ugly face closing down on hers. Ernestine screamed...

...

Through the street, the switch tender walked homeward, bent over, plodding. He hoped his wife had made some money tonight. Life was very dear,– a man had no luck if war clattered about him when he was no more young... He turned in at the shop door. Ernestine lay on the floor, face downward. An American soldier sat on a chair, one arm resting in a puddle of cognac, gazing, blear-eyed, at the woman's rumpled, black hair. The switch tender picked up a chair, brought it down on the man's head. Suarek crumpled onto the table. The switch tender reached for the knife which Ernestine used to slice

[1] 'Beat it! Get into the street!'

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the sausage. He plunged it into Suarek's breast and twisted it around. It appeared that there were bones there, very difficult to get through ... Suarek fell to the stone floor with a dull thud. The switch tender seized his feet, dragged him, through the door, down the alley, across the quai. He rolled Suarek into the river. Listened for the splash, below there, somewhere in the darkness...

"What is it thou hast done?" Ernestine's voice, behind him. So, she was not dead...

...

It grew light. Down the river French boatmen noticed Suarek, floating. They fished him up. They felt him,– he was living. All day they argued with one another what they should do. As he had on an American uniform, they called the police. The police sent for an ambulance from the Hôpital Américain. It was eleven-thirty when Suarek was carried from the ambulance to the operating room on a stretcher.

...

Breakfast. Miss Forbes, next Anne, was all smiles: 'Say, I'm goin' on Surgical. I've got a patient! Say, girls, isn't it great to have a patient?' 'You'll do well if you can pull that bird through.' Miss Conroy reached for a piece of black bread, tired: 'Say, but we worked over that man! Evans, and Major Fletcher, and Doctor Thurston, me and Ahearn, and two orderlies goin' steady for six hours.' Miss Conroy raised her bowl of coffee, slowly. 'Some Frenchman stuck a knife in him, they say.'

"But I thought Angelina was on that ward," said Anne.

"She's sick." Miss Forbes climbed over the bench, swept her crumbs up briskly. A patient, at last, thank God... If some nurses got sick, why all the better, that would be more patients... Her heels clicked as she walked toward the doorway...

"Say, Forbesey's cheered up, hasn't she?" said Mary Denton...

...

"Say, Anne," tears in Angelina's blue eyes, her hair spread, a great, golden fan, against the pillow. "It's that old horse meat. I just can't eat another bite of this food. Say, Anne, what are we goin' to do? We can't go six miles to get each meal?" "It's bad." Anne sat down, put her feet up on the bed's edge. "I brought you some paper," she said. "Thought you might want to write a letter while you're in here." Angelina shook her head. More tears... She blinked and swallowed: "Nothing doing. I wrote one yesterday,– told my mother some plain truths about this darn place. The Chaplain brought it back to me this morning. Everything's got to be merry and bright when you write home."

"Yup. You must never write the truth in war," said Anne...

...

Two nuns stood in the hallway of the hospital, their hands crossed

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across the thick gathers of their brown-black skirts. Gentle faces, separated from the world by frames of stiff, white linen... Anne looked at them as she went toward the office. The older one, whose skin was yellowish, full of pleasant wrinkles, looked eagerly at Anne through gold-rimmed glasses. The younger one bowed her pretty, oval face,– long lashes over pink cheeks... They had come, the older one explained, to see the American Commandant on most urgent business. They awaited...

When the Major was ready, Anne ushered them in. "We have come, Sœur Marie-Jésus and I, Monsieur, to ask that you accord us a favor which will benefit our work, and France," the older nun said. And as she talked, the white coif seemed to fade, to be gone. She stood there, a woman of the world, aristocratic, well-bred... "As you perhaps know, the Hôpital Complémentaire Numéro 204 gave each day what was left of their food to the Convent of the Holy Mother. At the convent we have pigs,– thirty large pigs. The product of their raising aids us to nourish the orphans of whom we have the charge. The Hôpital Complémentaire did not have half as much refuse as your hospital, but it has always been sufficient for our pigs,–"

"What does she say?" roared the Major. Anne translated. The older nun listening, eager...

"That which we desire,"– the nun's kind eyes shone. Was it not on the success of her mission that the welfare of her dear children would depend? "That which we desire is to be able to send every two or three days our little cart to fetch away the garbage from your kitchen." The Major's eye glazed as Anne explained this to him. Had he not just had constructed a fine incinerator behind the building? Had there not been a General Order relative to the Disposal of Garbage in Military Units? The Major had had his incinerator built to comply in every detail with the G.O. He walked out twice a day to watch its progress. The swill should be burned... 'Tell her we burn it,' he growled. Anne turned toward the eager, waiting face. "Monsieur dit..."

"Ah, but when Monsieur shall understand how very greatly we depend on this garbage," the nun talked quickly, "how much it is necessary to us to have it, he will give it to us! Of that I am sure! I understand that you burn it. That I understand quite well. Joseph, who drives our cart, when he came for the garbage last Tuesday, has seen the Americans dumping great barrels of it into a furnace in the yard. A very magnificent furnace, he said,– A stove so large that to make the garbage burn it would take all the fuel that is consumed in the House of the Holy Mother for a whole month..."

"What does she say?" the Major roared again. He sent Anne for the orders. The Master Hospital Sergeant came, licking his thumb and forefinger, he turned to Number 106 and laid it, slowly, on the Major's desk. Plenty of wood from packing cases, he remarked, to burn the

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swill with. There was a right way to treat swill and a wrong way...

"Tell her it's all here in the orders. Tell her they say we burn it," said the Major. "Tell her I regret..." He waved the file of General Orders toward the doorway. Anne, with as much politeness as she could muster, explained.

"But Monsieur le Major comprehends how much we need it?" the nun asked. In the kind face, surprise, incomprehension... "He understands that without this food, it will be necessary that we kill immediately more than half our pigs? He burns his garbage,– he realizes that the combustibles at this moment in France are almost lacking?"

"Oui, Madame. I am afraid he knows it," Anne said. The nun drew herself up. She turned, and made a sweeping bow toward the Major: "Bonjour, Monsieur. I regret to have so disturbed you. Merci, Monsieur!" She swept out, her great robes brushing against the sides of the door as she passed Anne. After her followed the sister of the pretty eyes, flushing slightly... "I am so sorry, Madame." Anne hurried, touched the nun's arm as she swept through the hallway. Should one call her 'Madame'...

"Ah, Mademoiselle, I understand." The sister held out a slender hand. Again the pleasant wrinkles deepened behind the glasses... "It is the orders, his superiors, that oblige him to do this. They do not understand the needs of orphans..."

"They do not think about it," Anne said...

...

"Say, Miss Wentworth." A man rose from his knees in wet blue overalls as Anne walked through the corridor to luncheon. She stopped. This happened every day now... From the scrubbing brush came a strong whiff of disinfectant. "I wonder if you could make out my application for transfer to the Air Service?" asked the soldier. "Haley told me you knew,–"

"Yes. I'll bring it over with me when I come back this evening," Anne said.

"Thanks." The man got to his knees, slopped his brush in the pail, began scrubbing. Wet, brown ooze... "I come over here to fight," he said, "and not to scrub floors."

"Yes, but somebody's got to scrub them," Anne said.

...

A golden day in autumn. Anne rode on her new bicycle, beside Lieutenant Evans. The Roman road led south, broad, straight, unbending like a railway... Built, centuries ago, to reach Spain quickly... Vivid green grass, sloping toward poplar trees, pale amber... Against the purple clouds, their edges golden... Across the little field, a brook running under a stone arch. Stone arch, that had carried a road once, to a castle, on the hilltop. Above the trees, the castle walls in ruins. Anne and Evans jumped down, wading in the brown stream. Water, trickling into shoes, cool and pleasant about hot feet. Evans stood,

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puffing his pipe, looking up at the sunlight on the poplars. The smoke from his pipe sucked under the ancient archway... He looked up, smiled: "It's a great war!" An old man in a blue smock plodded across the stone bridge, above their heads there. Leaning on his elbow, he looked down at them wading. 'Mauvaise Américaine,' he said. Evans looked up, pleasant, removing his pipe. What did the old boy say? "Oui, oui," he shouted, genial. "Nice day! Nice day!"

"Eh bien," said the peasant. "Amuse yourselves well!" He trudged on through the trees. The laughter of the Américaine followed him like music. Children, at their play, these Americans...

"There's a nice place to eat at Gradignan," said Evans, "tables, by the river..." They rode on. Strong muscles, pushing. Autumn sun, turning a golden red in the west. No need of talking... Gradignan. An arched stone bridge across a stream,– five or six stucco houses. Families at supper before broad fireplaces. Great white beds in the corners. The Inn, its broad door opening into a stone-flagged kitchen. Wood fire burning on the hooded hearth. In one corner shelves, with rows of bottles. A door opposite, leading to the garden. White geese, that waddled down a gravel path toward the water. A spreading grapevine. Under it tables, benches. They sat there, smoking, till a shower pattered. Feet up to the hearth, they watched Madame, the wife of the Innkeeper, flop an omelette, cook 'pommes frites' over the open fire. Behind, in the dark old room, an ancient, bent old Frenchman sat at a table, drinking. The old man talked, loud, to the Innkeeper who stood behind the counter. He shook his fist toward the Americans, mumbling... 'Fou.' [1] Madame tossed her head in the old man's direction. "She's right, he's full," remarked Evans. They pulled up to the table. "Ah, what an omelette!" 'A bas les Américains,' wailed the old man in the corner. 'They invade our home to steal our daughters...'

"And what potatoes!" Anne said... 'My daughter was a good girl. A good little girl, I assure you,' the man's voice rising, rising... 'Till the day when these Americans arrived. They gave her money... Money... For her soul, money...' Anne looked at Evans.

"How do they make potatoes taste like that?" he said... From the old man, wailing, incoherence... "I never thought war would be a matter of hundreds of good meals!"

'My daughter!' screamed the old man. 'I would like better to kill her with my own hands and throw her in the river than give her to these dirty pigs of Americans...'

"Chut! Chut!" Madame pushed the bent figure toward the doorway. 'Au diable ces Américains, tous!' he waved his arms. 'Let them be damned... Be damned.' The Inn door closed behind him...

"Never heard such a racket," said Evans, paring soft, green almonds. "Sounded, now and then, as if he might be saying some-

[1] Crazy.

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thing about Americans. Shall we have a half a bottle of Château-Olivier to finish off with?"

"Mademoiselle ought to go to see the Château-Olivier." Madame poured out the golden liquid, very genial. The old Fouquet had made a fool of himself... After all, Marie-Josèphe was gaining money... "Très vieux château. On y fabrique du très bon vin. Not far... It is my cousin who is the guardian of the château. My cousin would be enchanted to make Mademoiselle visit... A few francs,–" Madame, more and more friendly... These Americans, after all, understood nothing...

Evans paid the bill across the counter in the corner. "Ah, Monsieur le Lieutenant departs?" Monsieur, behind the counter, was also genial. "Monsieur désire une chambre-à-coucher à deux? There is one, above, very practical..."

"What's he saying now?" said Evans.

"Nothing," said Anne. "Come on!"

...

Letters from the United States. Everyone waiting, grabbing them, walking off... Everyone lost an hour, while they read them. People's eyes growing dreamy, distant. People silent. A dark cloud of homesickness, that settled...

Anne wandered in the park to read her letters. Should go to the office,– damn the office... Strange that letters should come on your birthday... A letter from her father, talking of the objects of the war, of Wilson. So, there was an object in all this? Anne had forgotten. Her father thought the war would last two years now. Twelve, people said in Bordeaux. Her father was proud of her. Foolish. Nothing to be proud of.

Her mother,– that gentle, slanting writing, talking of home, of details. Of Rosalind, taking a course in First Aid. The vegetable garden that she'd planted on the lawn toward the river. The fall anemones blooming in the front bed,– Anne laid the letter down. God... To go home... Home... Her birthday,– Her mother would have had a cake and ice cream... Couldn't even get milk here. All milk had t.b. germs... Cream, Anne groaned. She was a year older now than when she left home... She might be two years, three years, even four years older before she got home... They might be ill, might die, before she saw them... Geoffrey... Where was he? She went on reading, quickly. Geoffrey, to start overseas any time now... He was to be sent to finish training with the British. Her mother hoped Geoffrey might get into some rear area, for a while at least, when he got across...

Anne laid the letter down again. The rue Sainte-Catherine... Women, with reddened lips... Hovering... Talking... 'Promenade? Couchez?' Her mother would never want anyone to go to a rear area for a minute if she could see one... And yet, Geoffrey,– he'd

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be safe. Somehow you had no doubt at all of Geoffrey... She walked back to the office. Home... An anchor that dragged against your footsteps... The Quartermaster, ahead there, walking slowly, staring at the floor before him, feeling for the doorway of his office... "Hello," said Anne. But Drennan didn't hear her. The Major's door shut tight, a sign that said: 'Busy...' The Adjutant, elbows on desk, head in his two hands. On his desk, a letter...

The office. No one working. Corporal McFee, elbow on his typewriter, forehead on his hand. Beside his typewriter, a letter. Mahoney, on the orderly bench, heels forward, back against the wall. In his two hands, a letter. The other orderly stared at the floor. Lonesome as Hell... Christ, hadn't everybody in the whole damn Unit got a letter but him? The Master Hospital Sergeant sat, smiling, watching the others. Mail,– always took morale down... Civilian army,– fortunate that half the mail from the U.S. got lost... Miss Wentworth looking at McFee... McFee at Miss Wentworth, stretching, shaking his head... 'It's a great war...'

...

Evening. Anne rode her bicycle through the mist toward Saint-Ignace. Those meals, when no one spoke, after the mail came... Two rows of white-clad women looking at their plates in silence... You couldn't stand that... Not on your birthday... There was a little place called the Gros Figuier... Bicycle rattling over the rough road. Your muscles, working. "Ah, voilà Mademoiselle!" Little René met her at the door with a great flourish. Great, dark eyes lighting the slender, olive face above the dull, black apron. White teeth, gleaming... "Bonsoir, Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle va dîner chez nous? Maman sera très contente..." She washed her hands under the tiny trickle from a small, tin tank, and went out into the little courtyard. Tables stood under the sprawling branches of the fig tree, spread with cloths of checkered blue and white linen. La Mère Périgard, and Périgard, and René, leaned on Anne's table, serious, discussing what she should eat... 'Un poulet rôti? Une salade? Bon.' Madame and Monsieur went off to prepare it.

"Mademoiselle a l'air triste ce soir." René's great, dark eyes searched Anne's face. "Pourquoi?" he asked.

"It is my birthday, René."

"Ah, Mademoiselle, je comprends." The boy nodded. "Les jours de fête, pendant la guerre, sont bien tristes. The jour de fête of my mother last May, some friends were here. We were just drinking to the health of my mother when the Agent de Poste came with a telegram, which announced that the brother of my mother had been killed, à coté de Reims. C'est la guerre, Mademoiselle!"

With the chicken came Périgard, bearing a dusty bottle. He made a bow. Since it was the jour de fête of Mademoiselle, and since she had done them the honor to dine under the Gros Figuier, would she

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not, then, accept a bottle of the Malescot de Margeauz? It would be a gift from France, as it were, to the United States. Mademoiselle would do them great honor if she would accept their gift... Tears in Anne's eyes... A great lump choking her... She must say something, must make a speech. Lump in her throat... Not one single word of French in her head... Not one... "Thank you!" only English came out. "Thank you. You are good, very good!" She could not go on... The Mère Périgard patting her shoulder... 'Mademoiselle est très gentille,' she was saying...

Would they get glasses? Would they drink with her? Anne swallowed. She could talk now... They stood, clinking the glasses across the blue checked cloth on the table, the little René reaching his glass up proudly, arm's length. 'To the good health of Mademoiselle,' they drank. And afterwards to La France, and l'Amérique. Anne rode back to the hospital through the wet mist. Before her, dangling from the handle bars, a bottle... The good wine of Médoc...

...

Anne walked down the long cloister past the garden. The smell of dampness on late roses, wet magnolia. A bar of light slanting across the mist,– the door of Greenbaum's laboratory. The smell of iodine and salt, of alcohol and acid... Greenbaum, in a long white coat, bent over something under a bright light at a high table, silent, absorbed. At a sink near the door there stood a soldier, washing phials. The soldier looked up. "The lootenent, he's makin' some sort o' juice to put into that lousy bum over on Ward C."

"Suarek?" said Anne.

"Ye-ah. They sent in to the Frawgs for some of it, and the Frawgs, they said it would be ready in two days, so the lootenent's gonna make it. Looks like we'd be here all night. Say, I think that dirty Wap'd a been better off if they'd left him in the river."

"Shut the door!" said Greenbaum.

"Good night," Anne said.

...

Horse meat. Anne pushed her plate away. That smell,– God... And she had thought Angelina foolish to be sick... Anne hadn't minded horse meat, but now, that smell,– Your stomach,– Have to eat something, though... Sour bread. She laid the stiff, dark junk down. A fly fell into her red wine and swam there, buzzing. She got up from the table, went out into the drizzle. Hunger. Or was it sickness, that made her head swim? A sharp pain in her insides... She leaned against the rail that ran between the cloister and the garden. If there were only somewhere you could sit down... Chairs... You never had appreciated chairs in peace-time...

"What's the matter?" The little Quartermaster stopped beside her. "You don't look happy."

"I can't eat this darn food any longer,–"

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"Cheer up. Say,—" his voice grew confidential, "we'll have white flour next week. Found a whole carload of it down in the yards consigned to the U.S. Navy. The Navy didn't have no guards down there, so I just backed my truck up,— Say, when the C.O. gets round to it, you girls'll have your own mess."

"We'll be dead first." Anne walked across the dripping garden to the office. Head, ringing... Face, burning... She sat down at her desk. Not much to do now,— the place was organized to take care of fifteen hundred patients. They had a hundred. Venereal disease, a few mumps... The office, the Master Hospital Sergeant said, was 'running right' now... 'Running right' meant sitting untold hours doing nothing... Anne drew a piece of paper toward her. She'd write a letter... What was the sense? Write the Truth,— The Censor would hand it back to you tomorrow to be torn up. Write what you saw happening, right now, about you: 'Ten American sailors are coming in the gate and hunting for the prophylactic station. The people higher up are determined to keep the U.S. troops efficient. True,— but it would not pass the Censor. The sailors, disappearing under a large Red Cross behind the guard-house... 'We have been living on French army food so long that my stomach aches and my head buzzes...' Couldn't say that. 'We sit for hour after hour doing nothing,— four people to do every one man's job...' Anne pushed away the paper. Couldn't write today. Seeing the Truth too clearly... She laid her heavy head down on her hands, and sat there, eyes shut.

"Ah, I thought perhaps," Miss Perkins bobbed in, and sat down next Anne, shuffling papers, "perhaps you'd write some letters for me. There is this, and this, and Heavens, what did I do with,—" "Yes?" The woman's mind spun like a pin wheel... Threw out sparks as it spun... Sparks that went out... A good, kind woman... "Why, you look a little feverish, Miss Wentworth." Miss Perkins laid her papers on her plump lap. Must write for heavier uniforms for the nurses,— the nurses were suffering now in their white linen... The hospital getting so damp and cold, and no stoves, the nurses getting sick, even the strong ones. It was the food, perhaps,— the eating *had* been trying... Flies in the food... Flies over everything in the nurses' kitchen... She must ask the Major for screens. More important, really to get screens in the new wards,— Miss Wentworth looked sick... "You'd better go to the ward and go to bed, Miss Wentworth. I'll send Doctor Evans." Miss Wentworth looked too ill to write these letters... How would she ever get these letters written? Miss Wentworth seemed to grasp Army procedure... Knew how many copies,—

"I think I will go, if you don't mind," Anne said...

...

Bed, in the nurses' sick ward. Anne felt much better, now she was in bed. In the next bed lay an English woman who had been nursing with the French here. The English nurse had something terrible the

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matter with her. She lay, moaning gently. Anne wrote a letter to her family. Told them how lovely the vineyards looked, all golden brown in the November sunshine... About René and the little party on her birthday... Miss Brophy, efficient, managing, commanding in her white uniform, administered supper and made her patients comfortable for the night. Anne watched her weakly. Miss Brophy must have made ten thousand people comfortable in that same way... The right way... Under fire, Miss Brophy would go on doing it that same way... "Can't do anythin' with that English woman," Miss Brophy murmured as she straightened Anne's sheet. "She's all nerves." Miss Brophy said a cheery 'good night,' put the light out. Anne felt pleasant, drowsy. Wonderful to be able to sleep without listening to people talking, watching them undress... Women in their underwear, repulsive... Men must be disappointed when they,–

Dance music struck, loud and strident, in the nurses' dining hall across the courtyard... Marine officers had come out to dance. Beautiful, gay, young creatures, in greenish khaki. Younger, and with a touch more dash than doctors... Anne listened. You could not sleep, to music... 'Joan of Arc, Tee-Deedle-de-Dum, Joan of Arc, Tee-Deedle-de-Dum.' Voices, piano. Scuffling feet beating out a waltz tune. 'Let your spirit guide us through. Come lead your France to VIC-to-ry... Joan of Arc they are CA-A-A-Alling you...' "Damn!" Anne rolled over. Three beds beyond, the English nurse was sobbing. The band burst into jazz.

'If the Colonels and the Generals
Ever look on Heaven's scenes,–'

They were shouting now, pounding the floor. The band, syncopating the Marine Hymn...

'They will find the streets are guarded
By United States Marines!'

"Sister," called the English nurse between sobs, "I say, sister, could you come here a minute?" Anne watched the yellow streak of light that opened into the night nurse's ward kitchen. Jazz made your muscles quiver... It would be a relief to see the narrow strip widen and Miss Brophy's trig figure come into the dark ward... She didn't come. Jazz made your feet twitch, and your shoulders... "I can't stand it any longer. I can't bear it!" The English woman's dark hair tossed from side to side across the pillow. Why didn't Miss Brophy hear her? Anne slipped out of bed, tiptoed down the broad, shining linoleum that led down the middle of the ward. Just a little wuzzy in the head when you got up... She looked through the crack of yellow light. Miss Brophy sat leaning on the table, her gold-red head resting on her hand. On the table sat the Quartermaster, his legs dangling. Miss Brophy's other hand rested on his knee. 'It's a damn

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shame you hadda be on duty when there's dancin'.' Drennan took Miss Brophy's hand in his, patting it. A strange, loose look about the man's face... Hunger... Well, anyway, the same thing as hunger... Anne tiptoed back to bed. A loud giggle came from the ward kitchen... The English nurse moaned, tossed her arms in the darkness. Across the courtyard, boots shuffling, voices singing...

"..... Madelon! Madelon! MADELON!"

...

"I don't care, he didn't have any right puttin' them G.U.'s in the next ward!" Angelina, angry. She stood at the foot of Mary Denton's bed, tossing her gay head. "Men like them! The idea!" Anne kicked her suit case under her own bed. Out of that sick ward, anyway... Back to the talk now... "Swell idea!" said Angelina. "Us lyin' here and hearin' 'em swearin' mornin's. Say, there's some things you expect to stand in war, and some you don't!" She stood, chin out, hand on her hip, elbow tilted forward. That fighting Irish... "I don't see what Miss Perkins was thinkin' of, lettin' him do it,—"

"He's the Commanding Officer," said Mary Denton.

"What's the row? Who's in the next ward?" Anne said.

"Those G.U.'s. The idea! Them and their obscene language, right there," she pointed through the window, "in the next ward."

"What are G.U.'s?" Anne asked. Silence... Astonishment on Mary Denton's pale face... Her mild eyes meeting Angelina's... Angelina had stopped, her mouth open... Conroy, combing her hair, holding her comb still, back to them... Other nurses, who had been talking, stopping... Angelina, turning her curly head toward Anne... A look in the pink and white face that you used, long ago, to see on teachers... Somewhere behind, one of the nurses tittered.

"The G.U.'s," said Angelina, "are patients that have got venereal disease. There's two wards full of 'em. More than any other kind of patients. His Royal Highness has seen fit to locate the second ward full right next us. See?" Anne stood, looking out the window. Through the ground glass in the next ward, she could see two soldiers playing checkers. There had been a day, once, long ago, when Geoffrey had made her climb a fence into a neighbor's barnyard... Her bare feet had touched slime at the bottom... She had hung there, wriggling, not wanting to put her feet down... 'Come on, silly!' Geoffrey had shouted... 'It'll wash off...'

"Well, they say that some day they're going to put up some barracks out in the woods for us," said Mary Denton.

"Yes, just like they're going to get stoves to keep us warm!" said Angelina.

...

Morning. November. Cold, white fog, coming in the windows. And when you shut them, the ward seemed even colder. Cold water, tinkling in white, tin basins. Cold that bit your fingers, chilled your

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bare feet. 'Say, if we only had thick clothes,' moaned Miss Austin. 'Seems like now that we got decent food, we're goin' to freeze to death...' Anne hurried to the office. There was a stove there, made of white china. By standing very close to it, you could feel warmth. 'Be nice if we had a radiator,' said Mahoney... A truck, stopped at the guard-house, soldiers jumped off. A neat lieutenant, walking toward the hospital. 'Must be the Marines that's goin' to guard us,' the Master Hospital Sergeant, at the window. 'You won't see no more patients crawling over fences evenings. Them Marines does things right...'

"Do they?" Anne said...

...

Anne stopped by the foot of her bed and listened. Someone crying... Somewhere in this long, dark, chilly coldness... The nights were dark now. One could not go out and wander after supper... Besides, Marines challenged you at every corner: 'Halt! Who goes there?' bellowed, through the darkness. No place inside to sit... No light to read by... Nothing to do but go to bed in the cold ward... Anne saw a figure under a blanket, lying with her face toward the wall in the corner.

"Is anything the matter?"

"Only that I'm so cold," the nurse sobbed. "You work all day, and when you come off duty, you've no place decent to go and get warm."

"The Major's put in for some stoves from somewhere," Anne said.

"Oh, that Major! What does he care how *we're* fixed? The officers have got fireplaces in that château of theirs. *They're* warm. *They* should worry. I bet they'll put stoves in every other ward before we get ours."

"Come over to the office with me," said Anne. "We'll make a fire."

"I can't do that, Miss Wentworth," the nurse blew her nose. "This isn't any worse for me than for the others." Her breath, in great jerks... "I'm tired tonight, that's all..." Anne stood. Hated to leave her in the cold darkness, crying. Cold, pinching your hands, your feet... No use to stand here...

"Good night," she said...

...

"Say, Anne, wait a minute!" Angelina dodged across the long corridor with a tray. Angelina, delighted to do night duty... "I got some *wonderful* sick pneumonias," she said. "Come and see 'em!" She opened a door. The ward was full of negroes. Twenty-six black heads tossed back and forth across white pillows. Whining, quick groans. Coming from now here, now there. Like animals, all making the same noise. Black heads, moving, moving. A great negro sat up in his bed. Enormous black leg came down on the floor. The hairs on Anne's skin rose up in goose-flesh. 'That's all right, Sambo.' Angelina's hands were on the negro's shoulders. 'No more work to do now.

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You're goin' to get right back in bed and lie down...' The big man fell back, limp. The golden head bent over him, tucking in the sheets, smoothing his pillow... Anne tiptoed after Angelina to the ward kitchen.

"They don't act just exactly like pneumonias," said Angelina, cheerful. "Pneumonias ought to have a crisis. These just go up, sudden. Last night one of 'em asked me for a drink of water. When I came back, he was dead. I didn't have time to fetch the screen or anything..." Anne moved toward the door. "Stick round, Anne. I'm goin' to make an omelette for Greenbaum and Doctor Evans. I've got some mushrooms."

"But how do you get eggs?"

"That's easy,– the docs just put a few extra on the night food order,–" Angelina disappeared into the ward. Anne watched her stop by three beds, put her cool hand on the negroes' foreheads. She came back, slowly, looking from side to side at each bed... "One of these coons was tellin' me," Angelina broke eggs into a saucepan, "that he came down from Saint-Nazaire in a box car, with only just room to stand up. Said the officer told 'em, when the train stopped, that if they got out, he'd shoot 'em. He said they stood all the way, and that when they got here, ten of 'em had their feet frozen. His feet are bad yet,– Hello, Doctor Evans. Come in! Got something for you..."

"It's a great war," said Evans...

...

"I'm goin' on duty at last." Mary Denton smiled across the breakfast table at Anne. Mary's face had been a little sad of late,– perhaps from searching the mail, and seldom finding letters. Perhaps from the cold...

"Things are comin' up. We've got eight wards full now," Miss Conroy remarked. "What with measles and mumps and G.U.'s. Say, we thought we were comin' over to nurse the wounded." She laughed. "Five months, and old Suarek's the only sign of wounded!"

"What ward you goin' on, Mary?" Angelina yawned. Almost bedtime...

"Ward D. Spinal meningitis," Mary answered.

"Gosh. Better gargle your throat," said Angelina.

...

"Miss Wentworth, there's a lady here to see the Major." Mahoney screwed his face up. "Major says he ain't got time to see no ladies." Anne followed him out into the spacious hallway. A mourning veil hung from the woman's black hat, casting deep shadows into the hollows about her dark eyes. Clothes, a rusty black... Feet, in stout boots, mud-spattered... A light in the thin face,– A lady, rising, coming toward you quickly... Clothes didn't matter if you had a face like this one... A fine dignity about her... "I am your neighbor," she

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said in perfect English, "the Marquise de Chasteigner. I live in the château whose towers you can see above the trees there. I come to ask your Commandant—"

"I am afraid the Major's very busy," said Anne. "Perhaps I,—' She stopped. Two nuns had stood here... Quite like this... Same air of good breeding.

"Ah, then I can tell you, Mademoiselle, my business. It is not important. It is only that I should like to give your wounded at Christmas time, from my estate, a tree, un arbre de Noël,— I do not recall your name for such a tree. Ah, you would like it, then?" the fine face lighted. "That is good. And will you come with me to choose it?" They strode out along the muddy road together, the Marquise lifting her serge skirt in one hand, carrying her umbrella in the other, her stout, black boots marching through the mud with vigor, her black veil streaming. "Two years ago, I should have called for you in my carriage, Mademoiselle," said the Marquise, "but now,"— a little toss of her left hand,— "c'est la guerre! One must walk."

"It's fun to walk, Madame."

"I want especially, Mademoiselle, to give to you Americans an arbre de Noël from my estate, because for more than two centuries my estate belonged to your ancestors, the English. It was in my château where once lived Edward, the Black Prince." They walked on. The Marquise asked Anne about the hospital. The Americans had spent these three months, Anne told her, getting it ready,— cleaning, making over,— "But it was already a modern hospital," said the Marquise. "Everything there was of the most modern, of the most scientific. The Americans were lucky to get so good a hospital. The old ones, now"— the Marquise shook her head, "Oh, la! la!" Iron gate, clanging behind them. They walked toward the château under an arching avenue of oak trees. "You would like to see the château, n'est-ce-pas, Mademoiselle? We will do that first, then. The towers of Edward, the Black Prince, grow dark early, and in war-time, one has no light. We burn two candles in the evening, now, Mademoiselle, and two candles, perhaps, will not suffice to light a château!" The Marquise whacked the door with her umbrella. An ancient butler opened it, and bowing, stepped back as they walked in. In the great dining room they stopped to warm themselves before the fire. One had only enough wood to warm one room, said the Marquise... Anne looked at a photograph of three French soldiers. 'These?'

"My sons," said the Marquise, quietly. "They are fallen, for France."

...

They chose the tree, the ancient forester of the Marquise grumbling in his queer French. Did the Marquise not know that trees were very dear now? What was she thinking of, that she should cut another of his fine trees?

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"Chut! Chut!" the Marquise pointed to one of the tallest, greenest, "there, that one. It is for the Americans, who are come to save France!"

...

"Say, Miss Wentworth, could you translate this letter for the Major?" The Master Hospital Sergeant dropped a letter on the desk beside Anne. "No hurry," he said. Anne picked up a thin, French, official-looking letter. A round stamp at the bottom, with an illegible signature scrawled across it. She turned to her typewriter.

'The Medical Officials of the French Army in the sanitary district of Bordeaux,' Anne's typewriter clicking, jerky, 'were anxious to coöperate in every way with the officials of the American Army in preserving the best possible sanitary conditions for the troops in their district. According to the French Sanitary Regulations, the prostitutes of the city had been licensed. The prostitutes were examined each month by medical officers of the sanitary district, and those who should be found to be in good health, were given a license. The license should be demanded by all soldiers availing themselves of... In order that the coöperation between the two armies might be entirely satisfactory, a Medical Officer from the American Base Hospital should be sent to assist at this examination of the prostitutes, which took place on the second Tuesday of each month... The Commandant hoped that the American Major would accept the assurance of his most distinguished consideration...'

"Thank you." The Master Hospital Sergeant took the paper, reading slowly. "Here are some orders you might file, Miss Wentworth." He laid them down, not looking... Anne sat, gazing down at the pile of orders. France... René, and the Marquise... And the women on the rue Sainte-Catherine... Licensing... Making slime practical... 'BASE PORT – GENERAL ORDER NUMBER...' she was reading. 1. American soldiers seen on the street with women who are not in uniform will be arrested. 2. The attention of Commanding Officers is called to the importance of seeing that this order is strictly enforced... Corporal McFee, at the next desk, reading the order. His eyes met Anne's eyes, half amused, half solemn.

"Say," he said, "it's a great war!"

...

Freedom. An afternoon off,– once in two weeks you got one... Anne pushed her bicycle through narrow streets, head bent, reading a guide book. 'An excellent bit of Roman masonry is to be found in the rue de Beaumanoir...' Anne stopped, looking about her. Street must be somewhere near here... Two Marines, stood at a corner. Green khaki uniforms, red bands on their sleeves, the letters M.P. They carried clubs, and on their hips, great pistols... She'd ask them... Two soldiers strolled ahead of her, stopping at the corner. 'Can't go down there, buddy,' said the M.P. Then, as he saw Anne, 'Move

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on!' Anne stopped. It was a narrow street, with windows open. A short street. She could see two more Marines at the far end. 'Rue Prince de Galles,' the letters on the sign board...

"Can't go in there, lady," said the M.P. "Roman wall? Say, I guess the place you're lookin' for's up that way..."

...

Dancing. The Marine Officers had come, with music. The windows were open in the nurses' mess hall, the wood floor swaying, creaking... Anne danced with Captain Merritt of the Marine Corps, tall, slender, graceful... "Two of your men stopped me today," she said. The young man held her away from him, looked down at her:

"Did they? Where?"

"A street named for the Prince of Wales, I think it was,—"

"Heavens, you mustn't go down there! That's where the bad ladies live. No more Americans going down that street as long as the Marines stay." They danced on, dipping, whirling.

"I was looking for a Roman wall," Anne said...

...

Morning. A lovely glistening, drippiness about the mornings... Anne walked down the cloister past the garden. Sun, on the brown lined leaves of the magnolia. The smell of breakfast... Breakfast, good, now that the nurses had their own mess... Anne hurried, climbed in over the bench, sat down. White toast, jam, coffee,— a sensation under your tongue,— 'Say, Anne, I'm goin' out with Captain Merritt tonight,' Angelina, happy... 'And Austy's goin' out with Donovan.' Miss Austin, blushing... 'I'm dining in town with Greenbaum myself.' Anne reached for the toast. Life, coming up...

"Say, girls, *aren't* we havin' a good time?" said Angelina.

...

The office, warm from the white stove. A pleasant smell of wood smoke... The Master Hospital Sergeant standing with hands clasped behind him before the white stove. 'Good mornin'. The Major wantscher.' The Major, stiff, at his desk, staring at an order. Dictating: "Quote: 'OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SURGEON. ORDER NUMBER... On account of the unfortunate interpretation placed on American customs by the French people, American officers will not, in future, be seen on the street or in public places with members of the Army Nurse Corps or Civilian Employees of the Medical Department...' The above order will be strictly complied with by members of this Base Hospital. By order..." Anne's pencil moving. So you were to spend twelve years here without speaking to anyone but women... So they thought you were that kind, did they? They thought you were,— "See that that's posted in the Nurses' Mess Hall," said the Major...

"Oh, all right," Anne said.

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Lunch. Nurses, eating. Looking at their plates, saying nothing... Miss Perkins, at the table's end, saying how good the stew was. No one listening to Miss Perkins. They thought you couldn't be trusted, did they... Sent you out here, fed you on horse meat, and then refused to trust you... You'd behaved like, like,– as you would at home, and now they were admitting to the French that you were,– The women on the rue Sainte-Catherine,– officers were arrested if they were seen with them... And they were arrested if they were seen with you, too... One by one, the nurses swept up their crumbs and went out, silent.

...

'What do we care what the French think of us? The dirty dogs!' The storm burst. Angelina sat on Mary Denton's bed wrapped in a blanket, gold hair tossing. 'Haven't we behaved ourselves like ladies since we come here? Now, just because these dirty French think,–' 'They *do* think so, though,' said Mary Denton. 'My French teacher was tellin' me. They think it's scandalous for us to go bicycle riding with a man. Why, she says decent French girls never dine out in a restaurant,–' 'Huh! These officers, makin' these rules!' said Angelina. 'It's funny! That's what it is! One o' the boys was tellin' me who got prophylactic treatments last week,– You'd be surprised if,–' 'Shut up!' said Conroy. 'Say, haven't you been in training long enough to take orders without kicking?' 'Yes, but I think it's an insult,' said Angelina. 'There I was goin' to dinner with Captain Merritt. I got to call him up and tell him I can't go,– I might corrupt him!' 'Oh, dear. No more good food!' sighed Miss Forbes.

"We can go to restaurants by ourselves," said Anne.

"Say, Anne. What do *you* think of this rule?" said Angelina. "Now don't try this 'Didn't-come-over-here-to-have-a-good-time' stuff."

"I think it's rotten," said Anne. "I think it's going back on our own standards. We've been behaving according to our own idea of what's right. By this order, they're admitting that what the French suspect, is correct,– telling the whole world that they can't trust us."

"Well, can they?" said Miss Brophy...

...

"Our party's off, Miss Wentworth." Anne met Greenbaum in the dusk along the cloister. He looked round,– if you could only go somewhere and sit for a few minutes, talk this thing over... Queer how you wanted to talk to women, now they wouldn't let you...

"I'm sorry," said Anne. "It seems we're to be dragged back into the French ways." She stood, looking into the dark mist that bathed the garden. Hateful, to have immorality thus thrust between you... She stepped out, onto the wet path.

"I swear, it's rotten," Greenbaum walked beside her, "rotten to let the French dictate their standard to us. Makes you feel, somehow, as if you were guilty."

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"It's admitting they're right," said Anne. "That's what I mind. I thought our army was trying to do a little something different from the rest of them in this war."

"We are," said Greenbaum. "We've got a system that's efficient. You know, as far as the moral part of it goes," Greenbaum kicked a pebble down the pathway, "it's all bunk, the stuff they put out at home about our fine, clean army. You saw what Bordeaux was before the Marines came: our men made worse fools of themselves than any others. If our army turns out better physically than other armies, it's because we have more efficient physical machinery for keeping 'em healthy,– not because our men act any different. Our men aren't moral. We're making immorality safe for 'em, that's all."

"But American women," said Anne. "Are we going to be put into the same class with,–"

"I know. It's rotten!" Greenbaum shook his head. "Especially for a bunch like this, where they've behaved. But, you know, the worst of it is, we're idealists, yet we can't always live up to our ideals. That Captain who was down here from Tours last week told me that something like fifty nurses had been sent home up north for being pregnant."

"I wonder if that's true?" They walked, in silence. "Well, even if it is," Anne said, "I think it's better to have a high standard and sometimes fall short of it, than to give up our standard. To evolve ideals into facts is our real job in this war. Isn't it?"

"I hope so. The whole thing is certainly a waste of time and people if it isn't. All this boredom... You're getting wet, Miss Wentworth." Greenbaum peered at her as they passed through the rays of light that slanted from the cloister.

"So I am." Anne laughed. "And it takes a week to get things dry in our place."

...

"I get so I dream about 'em when I'm sleeping daytimes." Mary Denton raised her toast to her mouth slowly, as though the slice were heavy. Anne watched her as she ate her breakfast, slowly... Mary had come off night duty on one of the wards of spinal meningitis. Her eyelids, droopy... "Those lumbar punctures get on my nerves, Anne," she said. "I dream about 'em." She took a sip of coffee. "They say our serum's going to give out," Mary went on slowly. "I don't know what'll become of those poor fellows if it does, and we're getting more cases every day now." Her eyes, dreamy, on the window... She drank her coffee, raising it and setting it down so slowly. The other nurses at the table listening... They knew...

"There's one real nice boy in there," Mary talked on. You couldn't throw off this ward when you stopped working... "He lives somewhere in Jersey. He's delirious, and he keeps on telling how he's going home, nights. He takes the subway at Fourteenth Street, and he

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rides to Cortland. Then he runs among some market wagons to a ferry. At Jersey City he takes a train to Rahway. 'The sky's all pink,' he says, 'when you come out of the tunnel...' At Rahway, there ought to be a bus to take him right home. But somehow he never gets home. He starts all over again at Fourteenth Street. He tells it over, over... All night long he told it. 'Agnes,' he says, 'I ought to be home at half past six, Agnes.' Then he gets on again at Fourteenth Street. A nice boy, never says anything that you wouldn't want to hear. Not like those others,—" Mary sighed. She gazed through the windows to where the rain fell, softly, in the garden. Winter... It rained every day now... "I must go to bed," she said, "or I won't be good for anything tonight..."

"Good night," Anne said.

...

The Major, bolt upright at his desk, dictating slowly. Anne sat, bending over her note book, beside him. 'American Red Cross, Paris.' Anne wrote. 'Subject: Sudden increase in cases of cerebro-spinal meningitis at this Base Port... Increase has been such that there is at present sufficient quantity of serum for only two days...' Hooks, dashes... That was serious, what he said then... '... urgently request that the A.R.C. obtain supply of serum from the Pasteur Institute in Paris and forward same to this Base Hospital at the earliest possible moment.' "Get that written," said the Major, "and bring it back here right off. Tell the Adjutant it's to go in town by motor-cycle," the Major called after her.

"Yes," Anne, hurrying, through the entry...

...

"He didn't have no call to do that." The Master Hospital Sergeant shook his head sadly as he noticed the keys of Anne's typewriter flying. "The requisition should have gone through the Base Port, to the Chief Surgeon of the Zone of Supplies, to be forwarded to the Chief Surgeon, A.E.F. If the Chief Surgeon didn't have no serum here, why, he would have forwarded it to Washington. That would be the way to do the thing right,—" Anne twitched the paper from the typewriter, shook out five carbons, disappeared through the doorway.

"No time to do this thing right, Sergeant," she said...

...

"Any bundle arrived from Paris, Sergeant?" The Major himself looked in the office doorway. The orderlies, drawing their feet in, rising stiffly to attention... Standing like wooden posts... The Master Hospital Sergeant got up slowly. "No sir, not yet, Major. It's only been two days, Sir, since,—" "We'll send a telegram to the Red Cross, Miss Wentworth," said the Major...

...

"We'll send another telegram." It was the next day. Anne scribbled

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in her note book... The Master Hospital Sergeant filed copies sadly. 'It won't do no good to send telegrams in the army,' he said.

"It doesn't seem to," said Anne...

...

A package. Seals of red wax. 'Recommandé. Expéditeur: La Croix Rouge Américaine, Paris.' "Give it to me," Anne said. She snatched it from the Master Hospital Sergeant. 'Just wait till Mahoney comes back, and I'll send him,' he was saying. Anne opened the Major's office door with no knock. "The serum," she said.

"Give it to me." The Major, jumping up, snatching the package, running with it down the entry. Mahoney, saluting, dodging, turning round to stare. The orderly grinned at Anne.

"Say, the Major's forgotten that he's in the army!" he said.

...

"They're gettin' awful bad." Mary Denton rested her forehead on her slim hand. Anne watched her at the breakfast table. Tired... Tired... Suddenly Mary straightened and went at her toast and coffee briskly. Miss Perkins, standing in the doorway... Mary eating, quiet... The Head Nurse opening her umbrella, stepping out onto the wet walk... Mary, going limp... Like a balloon after someone has pricked it...

"But you got the serum," said Anne.

"I don't think that serum's any good," said Mary. "Two of the men died the day before we got it. But these they're giving that serum to are goin' just the same way. Angelina, can I borrow your hot-water bag to go to bed with?"

"My hot-water bag?" said Angelina. "Mary, my darlin', I lent my hot-water bag to that innocent lookin' little blue-eyed youth from California up on Ward F. When I came back to get it, he'd been evacuated to the G.U. Ward. Syphilis,– So my hot-water bag has been donated to the hospital. I don't know where I'll get another,– they don't grow in France."

"I'll get you mine, Mary," said Anne...

...

A report to go to the Major. Anne walked toward his office, reading. Captain Doorman reported that the antimeningococcus serum from the Pasteur Institute had been found to be ineffective in the treatment of cerebro-spinal meningitis... Anne laid the paper in the Major's basket. So Mary was right...

...

Evening. Anne walked down the long corridor of the hospital. Spotless, now, its waxed floor reflecting the electric lights... Going to supper. The food was good, now. You could look forward to it... But the nurses' ward would be so cold and damp to do your hair in... She stood aside for two orderlies, pushing a ward carriage. Next to

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the ward carriage, Miss Perkins, trotting, agitated. Miss Perkins, very much excited. On the ward carriage lay Mary Denton. Her head thrown back... Stiff and white... Her teeth clenched...

...

Supper. Two rows of nurses, looking at their plates and eating. Not looking at you when you sat down... "Say," whispered Angelina to Anne. "Mary's got it." "Got what?" "Got spinal meningitis." They ate, in silence. "And there's no serum," said Angelina. 'No serum,' somebody whispered down the table.

...

"Miss Wentworth, the Major'd like to see you in the office." The Master Hospital Sergeant stood in the doorway. He looked pained. No need to call the girl away from supper... Something must be being done wrong... Anne jumped up. "No hurry," said the Sergeant...

...

The Major, sitting stiff, upright, looking straight ahead, dictating an order. 'Lt. Gustav N. Greenbaum is directed to proceed without delay to Boulogne-sur-Mer to procure serum from an American Base Hospital in the region, and to return to his post by the first available transportation...' "I want Greenbaum to catch tonight's train," said the Major.

"All right," Anne said... 'It can't be done.' The Master Hospital Sergeant shook his head over the order. 'Those orders has got to go into the A.P.M. and be stamped. That office won't be open till tomorrow...' "Who is the A.P.M.?" said Anne. "Captain Merritt? That tall, slim one that dances so well? Give me the telephone." She sat down... Greenbaum, saluting, listening, amused. His 'musette bag' dangling from his shoulder. Paris... Couldn't start any too soon to suit him... "Here's your order," said Anne. "Stop at the A.P.M. Captain Merritt will be there to stamp it..." She walked out with him. Below the steps, a motor-cycle snorted in the darkness...

The Master Hospital Sergeant put the office lights out. A damned civilian army... Never get nowhere, rushin' everything like this... What was their hurry...

...

Morning. Anne shivered, opened her eyes. Penetrating cold. White fog coming in the open window. Miss Austin, jumping out of bed with a strange energy, putting her clothes on. Miss Austin packing clothes into a suit case, smiling, singing softly as she packed them. 'Liberty Bell,' she breathed, 'It's time to ring again...' In went the nightgown, the purple kimono. Miss Austin must be starting for Fall River... 'Liberty Bell, it's time to swing again...' Toothbrush, wash rag, soap... Cover of the suit case, closed, on top of them...

'We're in the same sort of fix
We were in seventy-six...'

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Miss Austin put on a cold white linen uniform, a stiff white apron. Pinned a starchy cap down on her brown hair.

'We're ready to mix and rally round you,
Like we did before...'

"Goin' on duty, Austy?" said Miss Conroy, yawning. "Yup! Goin' on special,– nursin' Mary Denton. Say, girls, but I'm glad to get a real job!" Miss Austin picked up her suit case, marched off. Her heels clicked briskness... Anne raised her head up, watched the stiff, white back disappearing through the ward door. As if a flabby collar had somehow got starched...

...

That day the order forbidding American nurses to associate with officers was rescinded. There was no rejoicing. "Now that Mary's got spinal meningitis," said Angelina at lunch, "I don't seem to feel so much like goin' on parties." Miss Austin came in quietly and sat down, reaching for the potatoes. "Say, Austy, how is she?" said Angelina. Miss Austin shook her head... Said nothing...

...

"Mary was tired." Angelina lay on her bed, rolled in a blanket. "And it's so cold here. When you come off duty you don't get warm. She never got really rested,–"

"She was worried," Anne said. She stood by Angelina's bed a minute, shivering... "Remember the way she hunted in the mail box every day, and never got anything?"

"Yes, I believe that Captain Thrall's only written to her once since he's been gone."

"Maybe that was the letter we found in her pocket," said Miss Conroy.

"There was a postal card censored by him on the table today," said Anne.

"Yes, and it begins: 'Kind Friend!'" said Angelina...

...

The park, beyond the garden. Anne walked, swiftly, through the soft rain. Thank goodness, she could always go outdoors, and get warm... The nurses couldn't. When they were through, they wanted to put their feet up. Strange people, nurses... Complaining about the food, about the cold, about thin clothing... But about duty, never. Mary Denton had gone calmly to nurse that spinal meningitis... Two more nurses had gone today to nurse a new ward of it... They had said nothing at all except: 'Glad to be working...' An epidemic of spinal meningitis and no serum... Anne stopped a minute. She could hear pine needles, dropping, dropping...

The Master Hospital Sergeant tossed a letter onto Anne's desk. From the wife of the Chief Surgeon, A.E.F.... She'd be at the hospital tomorrow to spend a few days,– wanted to live right with the nurses, just as they lived. Anne laughed.

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"H'mph!" she said, "she'll be cold!"

...

The Major stamped into the nurses' ward that evening, behind him the Sanitary Officer. Their breaths rose in little white puffs in the cold air. The nurses lay on their beds, wrapped in coats and blankets, watching the white puffs. They raised their heads,– what was the old fool Major coming in here for? Wasn't there any place where you could get away from,– 'Why aren't there any stoves in this ward, Lieutenant?' The Major, roaring... 'Er, you told me, Sir, to put those last two in wards M and N, Sir.' The Lieutenant, nervous... 'Have 'em taken out. See that they're in the nurses' wards before noon tomorrow. See that they're lighted.' 'Yes, Sir.' The two stalked out, their boots, clatter, clatter...

"Say, it's a great war!" said Agnes Theresa Brophy, from her blanket...

...

"Can't go to bed tonight, Anne!" Angelina's laugh rang, merry, through the cold ward. Anne had been to the opera with Greenbaum, – it was late now. A stepladder stood in the middle of the ward aisle. Perched on it Private Haley, doing something to a stove pipe. A great, black iron stove, standing there, on a tin mat. Little Saunders and five others, shoving at it, grunting. A corporal, watching. On their beds, the day nurses, wrapped in blankets. 'Gotta get this stove up tonight.' The Corporal walked up and down restless, nervous. Why'n Hell didn't Haley hurry... "Say, Sam!" Angelina stood looking up at Haley. "I'm going to begin gettin' undressed if you don't hurry." Sam Haley laughed.

"Go to it, Angy!" he called...

...

Early morning. The dark dawn of December. Fog, creeping in the window. The nurses, stirring in their beds,– the cold, penetrating... Two men, talking in low voices, rattling irons. Anne raised her head up. Soldiers, lighting the new stove. The smell of wood smoke. A pleasant roaring. The soldiers shutting things, creaking out, through semi-darkness. A red glow, and the smell of iron, heating... Anne closed her eyes again. Warmth... Thank God...

...

Supper time. The nurses' ward, warm and pleasant. You no longer had to shrink yourself when you went in there... Anne stopped in the doorway. Near the new stove Miss Brophy and Angelina were talking to a lady. A lady in civilian clothes, a green skirt, yellow shirtwaist... Colors,– There had been a world once where,– 'Say, Anne, come and toast yourself at our new stove,' called Angelina. 'I was just tellin' Mrs. Duncan,' said Miss Brophy, 'how surprised we were to see these new stoves this mornin'...' 'Santa Claus brought 'em,– in the night, too!' Angelina giggled. Miss Conroy came holding her

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great hands to the hot iron. 'Say, girls, all we lack now's a bath-tub,–' 'I was tellin' her, we've not only got a stove,' drawled Miss Brophy, 'but we've got a coupla patients from the G.U. Ward to come in every mornin' before we get up and light 'em.' The lady smiled, pleasantly. Things she had come to find out...

"Yes? And what is the G.U. Ward?" she asked, sweetly... A pause. Miss Brophy's red-gold lashes half closed over her eyes... "It's,–"

"The General Utility Ward, Mrs. Duncan," Angelina cast a quick look at Miss Brophy,– "patients who aren't in bed, so they can do light duty, you know..." Angelina's pink cheeks growing crimson... Miss Perkins trotted down the ward aisle. Why, how nice it did look with the new stove and the nurses all so happy talking to Mrs. Duncan,– Heavens you'd like to wear pretty colors like Mrs. Duncan,– you got so tired of dark blue,– 'Oh, Mrs. Duncan, perhaps you'd like to come to supper...'

"I see," said Mrs. Duncan...

...

Anne watched the green skirt, the yellow waist move toward the door. Gosh, when the war was over, you'd wear,– "Say, what did you tell her such a lie for, Angy?" Miss Brophy's lips curled.

"Because,–" Angelina's pink-and-white face thrust forward, blue eyes flashing,– "There's some things that women her age are too old to find out!"

...

"Well," said the Master Hospital Sergeant, "looks like some of us would get to the front after all." Anne took the paper. Heart, pounding in your throat... If only it would be you... Corporal McFee, coming over, standing behind her. Mahoney, jumping up from the bench, reading across her shoulder. Tenseness,– fading, fading... Only an 'operating team' to serve with a field hospital on the French front,– three doctors and three nurses... Corporal McFee turned, strolling back to his desk...

"Oh, Hell!" said Mahoney...

...

"Anne! I'm goin' to the front!" Angelina threw her arms round Anne's neck squeezing. "Isn't that great?" Anne drew back, looked at Angelina. Those blue eyes, pink cheeks,– that child... Hang it all, why should Angelina,– "Miss Haskell's goin' and Forbesey and me and Doctor Evans, and I don't know who else. We're goin' to start tomorrow." Angelina took Anne's arm, drew her toward the table. Anne, feelin' grumpy...

Anne ate in silence. Angelina would see the War, and she would sit here... Angelina would hear shells,– and she, Anne, would stay and grow old and grey, perhaps, typewriting in safety... Safety... Damn it... Already in a groove here... Already this life seemed the real one, the old life just a queer dream... 'Come on, Anne! Help me pack

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my bag,' said Angelina... Anne sat still. Didn't want to help Angelina pack her damn bag... If only it were *her* bag... Would nothing ever *happen* to you in this damned war? Angelina, hooking her arm through your arm. Rotten to grudge Angelina pleasure... They walked toward the sleeping ward together. 'Say, Anne, I wish you were comin' with me!'

"God! So do I," said Anne...

...

The Top Sergeant led a squad out to police the corridor. What was all these patients standin' round here for? And them nurses? Angelina came, the scarlet lining of her cape tossed back across her shoulders, gold hair escaping, a princess,— Miss Wentworth, carrying her coat behind her. Stopping, shaking hands with patients, nurses... 'Say, we'll miss you...' The Top Sergeant looked sour. 'S if this girl was goin' to a God damn party... Gigglin'... Say, she'd be gigglin' the other side of her face when she heard them guns... Little Saunders, next him, broom in hand, in blue jeans. God, he hoped Angelina'd see him... When his application to join the Air Service come back, he'd be goin', too... Might never see her again... Christ... Here she was, stoppin'... Other guys lookin' at yer...

"Be a good boy, Jerry," said Angelina. She'd show that old Top Sergeant... She kissed little Saunders. The Top Sergeant snorted. God, he wished she'd kiss him,— God damned foolishness, all this... Still any guy'd like to kiss them pink cheeks... Jest on'y shakin' hands with him, now... He, grinning. God... He straightened. Looked sour. These God damned sons of ..... sniggerin' at him... Yellow hair, laughin', walkin' down the hallway...

...

Sam Haley lurked in the hall outside the kitchen. Angy, goin'... No more kneelin' next to her at Mass, watchin' her pray... She might get killed, p'raps... Angy, who'd sat next to you in school... Who knew your mother... Last thread, hitchin' you to home was breakin',— There she came. God! She was pretty... Smilin' at you... Tickled to be goin'... Who wouldn't be tickled? When your application to the Air Service came back, then,— "Good-bye, Angy." Haley's eyes dropped as she gave him her hand. The kid saw through you... 'Say, Sam,' she shook his hand a little, trying to make him look up. He couldn't look up... Been lookin' in too many kinds of eyes, since,— He glanced sideways, foolish, staring at the scarlet on her shoulder. 'Watch your step, Sam,' she was saying, shaking her finger. How the Hell did she know? 'Keep your feet on the ground, Sam!' said Angelina. The Sergeant, glaring at him... He turned back to his kitchen. Aw, say, why couldn't they let a guy talk to decent women in this God damn army?

"Good luck, Angy!"

...

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An ambulance stood, drawn up before the front steps. Miss Perkins, fluttering beside it. Here were Miss Haskell, and Miss Forbes,– yes, good-bye friends, I do hope you'll be safe, and Doctor Evans, he really *was* good looking,– but where was Angelina? Everyone waiting, dear me...

Soldiers, raking the lawn, leaned on their rakes. Angelina, comin' out on the steps in her red cape... Kissin' Miss Wentworth, French style, both cheeks... 'Jesus Christ!' muttered the soldiers. The Major, openin' his window, watchin'... Slammin' the window... 'Boy, I bet the old man'd like to kiss her himself...' The ambulance growled, bounced forward... Miss Perkins' handkerchief fluttering... 'Good-bye, Good-bye...' The soldiers went on raking...

...

The steps. The curved, iron railing. Anne pulled herself up, slowly. Angelina gone... Gone to the front... And you'd stay here forever... Damn this old war,– 'Say!' Mahoney calling. 'Hurry up,' he said, 'the Major wantscher!' The Major, stamping up and down the office, glaring: "'When members of this unit leave for other stations,' he dictated, 'there will be no demonstrations whatsoever!' That's all!" he shouted. Damn these women...

...

Morning. The orderly bench was in the outside hall this morning. Two Marines sat on it. Why should that be? Anne walked past it, going toward the office. Adelaide de Lancey, a girl who had been in her class at college,– queer the way you began thinking of people at home all of a sudden... Adelaide's soft, southern accent... Adelaide tripping down the stairway, her brown hair curling about her soft cheeks, her dark eyes melting, as they met those of one of the suitors who were always waiting... Adelaide at a college dance that they had once had, leading her tall, handsome brother round by the hand, introducing him to people,– Shy, awkward college girls flushing, gasping as they met this young knight,– "Oop!" Miss Brophy, rushing out of Drennan's office, bumped into Anne, face on. "Excuse me! Say," she whispered, her narrow lips near Anne's ear, "I see you got G.U.'s waitin' on you, too." She glanced at the orderly bench across Anne's shoulder. Anne went on, to the office. The Sergeant sat by the stove, perusing orders. The Corporal, with his feet up, doing nothing.

"Where's Mahoney?" Anne asked. Perhaps he'd got his transfer to the Air Service...

"We got a new issue of orderlies," said the Corporal. "Sittin' outside now, didn't you see 'em? Patients, on light duty. Old Mahoney's gone to washin' windows. Say," the Corporal chuckled... "Mahoney'll make a Hell of a window washer..."

...

"Orderly!" Anne called. Getting military... Didn't want to get military... Must be an instinct that made you like to shout, and have

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men jump,– A tall man in a Marine uniform closed the door and stood beside her. Anne looked up. Seen this man somewhere... Oh, a dance... In college... This man was Adelaide de Lancey's brother... A flash of recognition, crossing the man's face,– He saluted, stood at stiff attention.

James de Lancey looked past Anne, out the window. A girl from home... Christ... Never thought you'd see a girl from home here... Wonder if she'd know what ward you were on? Why you were here? Christ! if only the floor would open, let you down through... Well, she needn't recognize you if she didn't want to... You could play the military game till Hell froze over...

Anne looked down at the order she held in her hand. The man had seen she knew him... Perhaps he'd rather she wouldn't recognize him... She looked up. His face blank, military... But flushed... Great beads of perspiration standing on his forehead... "How do you do?" Anne held her hand out. "How long have you been in the Marines?" De Lancey's militarism melted. He passed his left hand across the perspiration on his forehead. His eyes shifted as he shook hands... He'd been in the Marines six months, he told her,– no, hadn't heard from the family for three months. 'God knows what Uncle Sam does with the mail in this man's army...' "Will you take this order to the Chief Nurse for me?" White teeth, flashing in a quick smile. He took the paper, turned and strode off.

"Thanks!" he said, "thanks!"

...

'Say, has He heard anything from Greenbaum?' Miss Austin, at lunch. Her face, serious... 'It's five days now,–' 'I'm afraid not,' said Anne, 'why?' 'If he doesn't come quick, it'll be all up with Mary,' said Miss Austin...

...

"Never saw so many good-looking women in all my life." Greenbaum stood by Anne's desk next morning, beaming through thick glasses. "Paris,–"

"You got the serum?" Anne said.

"Yes, sure. Paris,–"

"You've taken it to the Major?"

"Yes, Paris,–"

"What took you so long?" Greenbaum, looking like a nice, old grey cat, purring... Had he forgotten Science?

"Why you see," said Greenbaum, "you have to send your orders to the French, and they take anywhere from two days to two weeks to return 'em. By Jove, Paris is marvellous. You ought to see it. Women,–"

"You had to wait for orders?"

"Two days," said Greenbaum. "God, I hated to leave when they did come. Boulogne was great, though. The Germans bombed it.

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They've got an ammunition dump next to each hospital up there. The Germans throw a bomb at a dump, and it lands on a hospital. Everyone crawls under the bed, and talks about what an outrage it is to bomb the wounded."

"Then you started back?"

"By the next train," said Greenbaum. "I'd been four days then. Didn't stop for any orders on my way back,– just ran through the gate and got on the blooming train without a ticket. If I'd gone through the proper rigamarole, I'd still be in Paris. Gosh, there's a place called Ciro's,–"

"Is there?" Anne said.

...

"Say, look at our new uniforms, Miss Wentworth. Aren't they pretty?" Miss Austin straightened up from the trunk under her bed. A new dress, of neat, grey jersey... "We won't freeze now."

"Fine!" said Anne. Miss Austin, now that she was nursing Mary Denton, always cheerful... Queer about nurses,– the harder the job got, the less they complained... "I'm afraid they're too late with that serum." Miss Austin folded her white uniform, packed it in her trunk. "Mary's awful sick. Maybe we can pull her through, though." Miss Austin bustled off, trig in her grey dress, her stiff white cap and apron. Anne watched her straight back. That was a real job, nursing... But this typewriting... These hours of doing nothing... Was that what war was? A little drudgery, and hours of doing nothing? Only thing that could take you out of it, pneumonia or spinal meningitis? Anne looked at the bunch of papers in her hand. Sam Haley's letter, that she had written for him weeks ago, asking for his transfer. All soiled and rumpled, pinned to it, six more pages. Well, she must find him...

...

"You wouldn't mind gettin' killed," Sam Haley shouted across the steamy kitchen to his friend Steve. "That'd be fun. It's this God damn potato peelin' gets your goat. Christ! I didn't come over here to peel God damn potatoes. Well, my transfer ought to come soon. Two months, now, since I sent the God damn,–" "Shut up!" said Steve. Sam's eyes followed Steve's across the kitchen. Through the steam he saw Miss Wentworth, in the doorway, in her hand a bunch of curly papers,– God! If this should set him free from swill, from greasy hands, from smells of cooking... He got up. The potato rolled across the kitchen. Hardly dared go... He wiped his hand on his apron, held it toward the letter. 'Sorry,' the girl was saying, 'awfully sorry...' His own letter, his transfer,– the thing that was going to,– that signature he'd written there, so careful... Now, smutted up with thumb marks... He turned the pages. One, two, three,– seven pages... Here it was,– the fourteenth endorsement, in the middle: 'Application Refused... Chief Surgeon, A.E.F.' All the others only said the same thing. Sam's hand fell to his side. He turned round.

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Back to the damned potatoes... He dropped the papers in the stove, slammed down the cover. 'God damn this army...'

...

"I've been discharged. I'm going." Private de Lancey stood by Anne's desk. He looked down, hesitating. Something he wanted to say to this girl... He gulped. She held her hand out. 'Good-bye,–' "You've treated me like a white woman!" His hand gripped hers,– hurt it. For the first time since that brief flash of recognition, his eyes met hers. "Thank you," he said. "Thank you!"

"There's a rumor that the Marines are going up front," Anne said.

"I hope to God they are!" said James de Lancey.

...

Captain Donovan, Captain Merritt, three other Marine officers in the corridor, saying good-bye to nurses. So the Marines *were* going... "We're ready to shove off any time now, Miss Wentworth." Donovan, the Marine doctor, cocked his head sideways. "We ought to see action soon," he said. He grinned. "Not a man in the regiment that isn't tickled silly. We didn't come over here to do police duty, you know..."

"No! I know," Anne said...

...

'A ratty looking outfit,' said Corporal McFee, in the office window. Soldiers were climbing out of a truck before the guard house. 'National Army,' said the Master Hospital Sergeant. 'Like the rest of us,' said Anne. The Marines, climbing into the truck, putting their things in, cursing. How was it that they kept their uniforms from wrinkling?

'If the Colonels and the Ge-enerals'

they were singing. The truck, growling, lurching...

'Ever gaze on Heaven's scenes,
They will find the streets are guarded
By United States Ma–'

The voices faded in the distance...

"Those boys'll see service before the month's up!" The Master Hospital Sergeant strolled back from the window.

"God," said Corporal McFee. "I wish we all would!"

...

Evening. Misty. Anne rode her bicycle over the six miles to Bordeaux to dinner. You had to be alone once in a while... Away from the talk of sixty other women... Women, alone, together,– well, forget them for a while... The restaurant, small and dimly lighted... A table, in a corner... A cigarette... A bottle of wine... A pleasant waiter... Hors d'œuvres... People who glanced at you and glanced away,– 'infirmière...' Luxury, this... One of the good things...

She pushed her bicycle out, into the night. A fog... Not so good, this... She got on, rode... Slowly, you could see nothing. The front wheel, crashing into something... She got up, stood, rubbing her bumped knee. Why, that was the Cathedral,– It stood in the street

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in a queer way. Here was a tram car,– follow it as far as Saint-Ignace... She got on and pedalled quickly after the blurred light... Saint-Ignace, its lights yellow spheres in the dank fog. From here on, a mile and a half of darkness. Anne got off. Be sure to get the right road... Two soldiers lurched off the tram, and started walking. Hospital Corps men... Drunk... Anne pushed her bicycle behind them in the black mist. Didn't want to pass them... They stopped to empty their bladders in the gutter. On again, shuffling... Lurching...

The guard-house at last. Thank God. Guard, stopping the two soldiers, asking for their passes... Anne waited, in the darkness. 'Say, who th' Hell are you?' Sam Haley's voice... Light from the doorway falling on his tipped hat. 'You ain't a guard,' he shouted. 'There ain't no guards in the whole God damn town, I tell yer! Say, you can go anywheres you wanto. Got outa here over the God damn fence this evening. Nobody seen me. Whole God damn town is,– Say, what the Hell?' The Corporal of the Guard was dragging Haley round the corner. He pushed him through the door under the Red Cross. 'Pipe down, you God damn...' Anne handed the guard her pass, pushed her bicycle through the narrow wicket.

"Nice night!" said the guard.

"Wonderful!" said Anne...

...

Orders to file. What? What was this? 'Members of military units who have been in active service for a period of six months may apply for Leave of Absence...' Anne reached for a paper, screwed it into her machine. 'From: Secretary, A. Wentworth. To: C.O. Base Hospital F. Subject: Leave of Absence. In compliance with G.O. No. 63, Base Surgeon, I hereby...' She knew the jargon. She jerked it out, signed it, handed it to the Sergeant. Paris... 'This has to go through channels,' the Sergeant, reading slowly...

"I thought there'd be some trick about it," Anne said.

...

'Of all the mean, low-down things! He hadn't any right,' Miss Brophy's chin protruded. The red mouth snapped into an ugly line, down at the corners. The light caught her red-gold lashes as she lowered them. 'He's got a right to do what he likes in this hospital,' said Miss Murphy, opposite.

"Who has?" Anne took her place at the table. So, there was a row on... Inspection that morning... After inspection, every one's nerves,–

"The Major," said Miss Brophy. "He makes sick patients sit at attention in bed. One of my men fainted away this morning,–"

"He's going to make this the snappiest hospital in the whole A.E.F...." said Miss Murphy.

"Say, what's the use of it bein' the best hospital," said Miss Brophy, "if all the men in it hate it? I went through Ahearn's ward this mornin'.

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She had all them mumps patients in bed again. They was all up yesterday, walking about. Today, all sick. Why? Because His Majesty bawled Ahearn out yesterday when he seen footmarks on the linoleum..."

"Only way to keep footmarks off the linoleum is to keep the men in bed," said Miss Ahearn gently. "I can edge along side of the linoleum, but the men can't." 'Say girls, I hid my swill pail in the woods this morning,' said Miss Andrews. 'Got such a bawling out last week for having it in the ward kitchen.' 'Say, I'm goin' to do that next week,–' said Miss Ahearn. 'I'll find some real thick bushes.' Anne laughed.

"It certainly is a great war!"

...

An envelope, addressed in Geoffrey's writing. 'Officer's Mail,' no stamp. Geoffrey must be in France, then... Anne's fingers trembled as she tore it open. He was 'somewhere'... He'd been under shell fire... His feet hadn't been dry for a month... The men were 'good scouts'... She put the letter down. Geoffrey, near the front... At the front... Well, anyway, thank God he wasn't near the rear... She sat, silent, looking out the window. So this was the beginning...

...

'Miss Conroy!' A hoarse whisper, breaking into sleep. Anne raised her head. A night nurse was bending over Conroy's bed. 'A great, big negro,' said the night nurse, 'shot three times through the abdomen by these new M.P.'s.' Conroy up, dressing in the darkness. 'Well, that'll be an operation for us,' she said.

...

"The Marines, they used to club 'em." The Master Hospital Sergeant drew his chair up to the stove. Anne stood, warming her hands. "Clubbin' a man don't do him no harm," drawled the Sergeant. "They'd take him to the guard-house and their own doctor, there, he'd sew his head up. You didn't see no patients comin' here wounded by the Marines! They hadn't oughta let nobody but the reg'lars do M.P. duty. In the end they'd save men." The Corporal winked at Anne.

"Guess they would," he said.

...

The Master Hospital Sergeant, leading in a smart, young Captain. 'Meet Cap'n Jones, the Assistant Provost Marshal...' Anne stood, shaking hands. 'Miss Wentworth'll go with you and take the deposition...' 'Yes, yes, Miss Wentworth. We'd better hurry,' said the Captain. Damn nigger might die... 'Why, there isn't any hurry, Captain,' drawled the Sergeant...

'Ward F, here we are! Miss Brophy, this is Captain...' 'What do they want to bother him *now* for?' growled Miss Brophy. She led them through the neat ward. A man, huge and black, and lying deathly still, propped on pillows... An ashen look, as though the blood

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had gone, below the blackness... Miss Brophy leaned down, laying two slender fingers on the man's wrist. 'Listen, Tom,' she stroked his forehead, gently. Heavily the man's lids opened. Mild eyes... 'They want to ask you questions. Try to listen.'

"Deposition of Thomas Jefferson Marvin," said the Captain. "One..." The Captain questioned. Miss Brophy repeated, softly, in the man's ear. Anne wrote the question. Watched the red head, bending near the black one. Tenderly, as if she were his mother... Strange women, nurses... Miss Brophy's fingers on the man's pulse, waiting... Painfully, the lips of the big negro opened. A faint whisper:

"No... I... I... didn't threaten to kill..." His lips went on moving. No sound... Miss Brophy flashed an ugly look at the Assistant Provost Marshal. "That'll do," she said. He turned to go. Anne lingered. 'That's all right, Tom,' Miss Brophy, saying softly to the negro. 'Nobody's going to bother you any more now. You can go to sleep now...' Then: "Get the screen..." she hissed to the ward tender...

...

Morning. Winter sun touching the cedar tree outside the office window. 'Some Leaves of Absence come through.' The Master Hospital Sergeant handed Anne a bunch of papers. God... Anne handled them over, fingers shaking. Must find hers... It must be there,– it had gone with the first ones. Coleman, Enneking, Drennan,– so Drennan got his... Wonder if Miss Brophy got hers? They went in the same day. Miss Andrews, Miss Murphy, by Jove, she did get it, – Miss Brophy. Nothing for Miss Wentworth. She took the Leaves of Absence to the Major. He approved the officers' applications. "Send 'm round," he growled. Then he took the nurses' papers, laid them aside. Anne waited. "We'll hold these over till tomorrow," said the Major. Anne gathered up the papers. So the old boy was wiser than they thought him...

"Oh, all right," she said.

...

"A death report to make out." The Master Hospital Sergeant stood beside Anne's desk, fingering papers. Got to get this done right... "Name," he said, "Thomas Jefferson Marvin." The information came slowly. "Rank, private." Anne waited. "Color, black. Company,– you'll find that on here." The Sergeant paused, shuffling the papers. "Cause of death,– er...' Anne's fingers poised over the typewriter keys. 'Yes?' The Sergeant pulled the long end of his moustache.

"Result of his own misconduct," he said... The keys flew...

...

A sunny afternoon. The first batch of officers going on leave stepped into the ambulance at the front steps. Major Coleman, headed for Biarritz. Enneking and Drennan, bound for the Mediterranean,– by way of Paris... The ambulance bounced off. Corporal

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McFee, standing beside Anne in the office window, rumpled his hair:
"Say, it's a great war!"

...

The Major's train went first. They left him at the station. The two young officers strolled back to the rue Sainte-Catherine. An hour to wait... Drennan spat in the gutter. "Once I get away from here, I'll be all right," he said. "Soon's you get away from a thing, you forget it." Forgot Maggie, didn't he? If he could forget her, he certainly could forget this stringy, red-headed, white-faced Brophy woman, with her red lips... Unbearable to carry Maggie and Brophy both in one's thoughts... Mustn't think about anything in war... Thinking got you crazy...

"Yup," said Enneking. "Say, we got time to stop in at the Café de Bordeaux and get a cognac." They sat down at a table. Two women came and sat at a table next them. The women ordered 'Fine.' They glanced at the two officers from under their deep hat brims. Eyes omnivorous, searching... One of the girls was sallow, and her hair, under the broad hat, brown-red. Drennan gulped a cognac. That girl there looked something like Miss Brophy... Damn the woman... The two officers paid for their drinks, walked toward the station. Enneking talked. Drennan trotted, silent. The woman had turned half round in her chair, and looked at him as he went out. Her neck, like Brophy's, full of hard cords. Damn it, he hated that kind of women... He liked soft ones... The other girl, now, who'd been giving Enneking the glad eye,– she was curved, like Maggie... Didn't want to even think of Maggie... Intolerable now to think of Maggie... Think of soft, sweet Maggie, when you couldn't,– Brophy was right here in this same town... And he was taking the train for nobody knew where, to start all over again on being lonely... A lot of Frogs round, talking a lingo that you didn't compris... You knew what you wanted... The hell with Paris,–

"Hell I ain't goin'," said Drennan. Enneking watched him jump into a horse cab. "Hôtel de Bayonne."

Enneking found himself a corner of a first-class carriage, very dignified and very lonely. A French girl, opposite, looked at him, narrowed her eyes. Nodded, just a little... Now what in Hell did she,– Christ, on the train?

...

The next evening, an American ambulance set down Miss Andrews, and Miss Murphy and Miss Brophy at the Gare du Midi. They stood on the sidewalk, in heavy blue uniforms, red-lined capes, waiting while a sergeant bought their tickets. Starting for Marseilles and the Riviera. Stopping, by the Major's advice, at places called Toulouse and Carcassonne. The Sergeant shook hands with them, said goodbye. They watched the ambulance bounce off. It would be turnin' by the Cathedral, headin' for the hospital... Just for a minute you wished

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you was in it... 'Glad the Major had our tickets bought for us.' Miss Andrews sighed. 'It's awful talkin' to these Frogs.' 'Salle d'Attente. That means waiting room,' said Miss Brophy. They carried their bags in. The two older women settled themselves on a bench there.

Miss Brophy peered out into the smoky emptiness of the train shed. High, dark, with four long, dirty platforms. Water, that came drip, dripping down from somewhere. An old French porter in a blue smock, struggling up the platform with a truck of baggage. Miss Brophy, restless... She went out into the damp chill of the train shed, paced up and down the platform. Up... Down... Up... Down... Miss Brophy, pacing. Boxes... All painted grey... All alike, like everything else in war... Everything grey or khaki... Everything alike, no color... You thought War was going to be exciting. It wasn't. Just drab. An officer walked out from behind the boxes. Miss Brophy stood still. Drennan... God! Her pulse... She wanted to turn, and run... Wanted to scream... He crushed her narrow shoulders in his arms. Liquor on his breath. His lips, hunting for hers... Unshaved chin scraping her cheek as her lips evaded... A-a-ah, he found them... The tenseness left her body. Her eyes closed... She hung, limp, trembling, dizzy... His arms... His arms... The blue uniform hat slipped from her gold-red hair, rolled on the platform.

"My God!" she muttered. "My God!"

"You're coming to Paris with me!" Drennan, commanding, Irish... A fighter... And he had had three drinks.

"No. I got my ticket for Carcassonne..." feebly. She'd go... She knew it... Had been knowing it now for four months...

"I got your ticket to Paris. Go get your bag!"

"Pick up my hat." He stooped over and picked it up, brushing it off gently with his sleeve. She jammed it on, stuffed the copper-colored wisps inside it.

"Our train comes first. I'll wait here." Drennan watched her walk away from him, slowly, down the platform. She would come back... He cleared his throat and spat into the train track.

...

Miss Andrews and Miss Murphy were still sitting. They started when Agnes Theresa Brophy came in. The train? To take them away into the unknown world... Oh, dear... 'No, the first one isn't ours,' said Miss Brophy. 'There's quite a while to wait yet. I'm just goin' to take my bag out there to sit on. It's,– so hot here...' Miss Murphy watched the straight, slim figure, in its dark blue, go through the door into the smoky darkness...

"Say, she's a queer one," she said...

...

The train for Paris gave a shrill, small whistle, and lurched forward, men running from the urinoirs to jump on, doors closing. Miss Andrews and Miss Murphy, leaned out the door of the waiting room and

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watched it. What on earth? Why, there was Agnes Brophy, right in the window of one of those queer little compartments, setting down... Miss Murphy gave a shriek and rushed out on the platform. She waved her arms: "Agnes, you're on the wrong train! Say, Agnes!" The train moved faster, faster. She ran beside it. There was a man next Agnes... Putting her bag in the rack... An officer... Drennan... Miss Murphy stopped, collided with the ancient French porter in the blue smock. 'Attention!' The ancient porter seized her, pulled her backwards. 'You know well that it is dangerous to run the length of a platform bondée de monde! Mon Dieu! You are not prudent in America,–' "It's my friend!" shouted Miss Murphy, "qui est... sur... le... l'autrer train! The wrong train, stupid. The wrong train!"

"Eh bien!" The old man threw both hands out: "c'est la guerre, Mademoiselle! C'est la guerre!"

...

The Major stopped the ambulance, as it drove into the hospital yard that evening. The Sergeant stepped down, saluted. 'Get those nurses to the train on time, Sergeant?' 'Plenty of time, Sir!' 'Get 'em their tickets?' 'Yes, Sir. Three to Carcassonne, Sir!' 'Right, Sergeant.' The Major saluted. The ambulance went on. He turned away along the path toward the Officers' Quarters. No scandals around *his* hospital, thank God!

...

On the train to Paris, Drennan and Miss Brophy sat close together in the dim light of the first-class carriage. Night came. They leaned nearer, nearer. Drennan's hand against the taut muscles of her body, felt them soften. An old Frenchman opposite raised sleepy eyelids and looked at them. He closed them again, smiling. Youth... Drennan coughed. Not exactly happy... Why in Hell should this woman be reminding him of Maggie... Damned annoying, now, to think of Maggie... Feeling a thin, hard thing, and tryin' to think of,– Hell, nobody ever *really* got what they wanted...

...

Letters from home. Anne sat at her desk, reading. This world dropped from you... Another world came... The house, at Downham... The firelight... Chairs... Uncle Caleb's house, across the river... Rosalind,– why, what was this? She was engaged to Randolph. Anne laid the letter down, looked out the window. How would the family hit it off with Randolph's southern mother? A famous beauty,– everyone who came from the south always knew her, 'Yes, Margaret Randolph, she was...' She'd lived in Washington, her husband had some job there... She'd had an affair with some army officer down there, and her husband,– a sad, quiet man, they always said, her husband,– had taken her back to his country place out near the Blue Ridge. The officer had followed. The husband had ridden his

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horse over a cliff somewhere and been found, dead. The officer had been ordered to the Philippines, and Margaret Pendleton had taken herself and her young son, and all John Pendleton's capital to Europe. They had lived sumptuously, in Paris, in Rome, on the Riviera. Randolph had told Anne's mother about these strange winters,– foreign schools, and in vacations, gayety: French counts, Italian musicians, Russian princes, 'friends' of his mother's... Then suddenly, all the money was used up. They had gone back to Virginia, and Margaret had thrown herself onto the altruism of her cousin, Judge Olvany. The Judge, it had been, who had sent Randolph north to college. The Judge who had sent him to join the Ambulance Corps in France. Randolph was on his leave from that now...

Anne picked up the letter. Randolph was going to a French flying school when he came back. He and Rosalind wanted to get married before he came back, but his mother, it seemed, was putting up a racket about that. 'I gather she is a person who likes to have her own way,'– Anne's mother, charitable... Anne laid the letter down. 'I never can bear it when mother cries,' Randolph had said once... He had always been a little bit on the defensive about his mother,– admiring her,– defending her,– as if he were afraid you'd criticize her... There was something more there than,– that was the trouble with beautiful women, and their sons... A letter from Rosalind. Love didn't sound so pleasant. A good deal like a toothache... She was learning to be a Nurse's Aid... She'd be sailing for France soon,– she'd see you,– Anne looked up. Corporal McFee's eyes,–

"What makes people at home think that when they come over here they'll see you?" she said. He laughed.

"No one at home has any idea what War's like."

...

"Papers to be made out for a court-martial, Miss Wentworth." The Master Hospital Sergeant stood over her desk. "The Major wants 'em right off. Take your time, now, we got to get these done right." Anne rolled a blank form into her machine and sat there, waiting. 'Saunders, William E. Private First Class...' Anne's keys clattered. Cute, gentle little Saunders... 'For being absent four days without leave...' Heavens... 'McPherson, Private... For being drunken and disorderly in uniform...' Was he, then, to take his uniform off when he,– 'Haley, Samuel E., Cook...' Angelina's schoolmate,– A cook who'd meant to be an aviator... 'For contracting venereal disease through neglect...' So that was,– Why, Angelina would be sorry about that...

"Say, you got them Court-Martials ready, Sergeant?" The orderly stood, waiting.

"What's his hurry?" said the Sergeant, "if he don't get 'em before dinner he'll get 'em after,–"

"They'll be ready in just one minute," Anne said...

...

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"Let us sit here," the Marquise drew two chairs before the fire after dinner. "In these days one does not heat the salon." The Marquise rested her stout boots against the fender. Anne sat across from her. Before this huge, stone fireplace Edward, the Black Prince, had once sat... The ancient butler spread a cloth of black velvet on the huge table, replaced the two heavy, silver candlesticks, with their dim candles. He bowed his white head, retired behind a door and closed it.

"Tell me, Madame," Anne hesitated,– "what do the French think of us Americans? I would so like to know!"

"Ah, Mademoiselle, when you first came, we did not understand you. That young men and women should dine together in restaurants, go riding into the country on bicycles together,– and that no harm should come of it,– that seemed impossible to us. But we have changed our ideas. We see now that you behave so because you are *idéalistes*, not purely *hédonistes* as we had first thought. You have an ideal of conduct that is very high, is it not so?"

"We believe that if two people know how to behave they can,– can be trusted."

"It is a noble ideal," said the Marquise. "We respect you for it. But sometimes we think it is an ideal impossible to achieve. Human nature, Mademoiselle, is weak. And your young American men,– are they then so very cool toward women? Are they so chivalrous in their designs toward them?"

"It depends on the women," said Anne. "American men can usually live up to the standards women set them."

"Your system, then," said the Marquise, "throws great responsibility on women. It is necessary for the women of America to be cool, and very strong. To have known you, Mademoiselle, has taught me many things. French parents shelter their daughters,– they would not send them to a foreign country with the army. But your parents have armed you with ideals,– you carry an ideal to protect you, is it not so?"

"Yes," said Anne. "They trust us,–"

"The ideal to work with men, and play with them as equals. It is a new ideal. Perhaps it will succeed, who knows?" The Marquise leaned back, the fire lighting her fine face. "Long years ago," she said, "a new ideal started in France,– here in this land of Aquitaine: the cult of chivalry. It raised women from the estate of chattels, where paganism had put them, and glorified them. It made them people to be looked up to, cherished. It has not been entirely successful,– chivalry. The ideal has passed in many cases into a mere form,– but those forms have made the world a gentler, a more polished place to live in. Perhaps your cult of idealism, of freedom, equality, purity, may change the world again into a new place. And yet,–" The Marquise sighed a little, shaking her head, "human nature is frail, is

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imperfect. In this world the most brave are also, sometimes, the most weak."

"Are they?" said Anne...

...

Miss Austin lay on her bed. It was her afternoon off. Anne stopped beside her. "There's mail for Mary Denton," she said, "one from Captain Thrall, two from her sister. Perhaps you'd,–"

Miss Austin shook her head. "She's never been conscious."

"But the new serum?"

"It got here too late. I don't know," Miss Austin sighed,– "I don't see how she can stand any more lumbar punctures. Her sister don't know where she is," said Miss Austin. "They say the Major won't let Miss Perkins write her. Some darn rule,–"

"G.O. 13," said Anne, "'the physical or moral condition of the troops,–'"

"Say, girls!" Miss Austin sat up. "I'm goin' in town tonight with Doctor Thurston..."

...

Evening. The restaurant was gay with many mirrors. Fountains trickled into pools, among rocks. A tree, sprouting through the floor, disappearing again through the ceiling. Anne followed Greenbaum toward a table. Tomorrow she was going on her leave... Tomorrow, freedom... They sat down. 'A-ah.' Greenbaum, discussing earnestly with the French waiter. 'This partridge,' the Frenchman indicating, eager, 'would come from the forests of Périgueux. Elle serait exquise!' Anne laughed. "What's the matter?" Greenbaum leaned back. Uniform hat suited Miss Wentworth... A clean-cut, tailored sort of person...

"We take our food so seriously," Anne said.

"We've been at war nearly six months," said Greenbaum...

...

"I hear," Greenbaum looked up from the hors d'œuvres, "that Drennan and Miss Brophy are together."

"Yes, Angelina wrote she saw them last week in Paris." So he knew that... "What a queer thing war is," said Anne. "Why do people act so differently over here?"

"They don't," said Greenbaum. "They just act quicker. Civilization drops off, and they go back to the primitive instincts of men. You couldn't any more write a novel about these affairs of the war than you could write one of the affairs of the barnyard. The motives are too simple."

"It's all madness."

"On the contrary, it's extremely normal. Think how many more generations,– how many more centuries,– the human race has fought and mated than they've been civilized. Why, civilization is just a mere crust on the surface. Every now and then the older forces, the fighting

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impulse and the mating impulse, bob up and destroy it. You can call war madness,– or you can call it getting back down to hardpan,–"

"D'you think men like to fight?"

"Sure. Most men take to military stuff like ducks to water. What they don't like is what civilization does to war,– organizes it, so that six men rot round in towns like this while one fights. The six can't get the fighting, so they revert to the male and female side of it. But I don't think there's a man here who wouldn't rather be up front." The waiter flourished the partridge from Périgueux before them. They pronounced 'her' a most admirable partridge... "There's infinite courage in the human race, you know," said Greenbaum. "Our barbarian ancestors had to be brave, or perish. And it was the ones who had guts and survived who fathered the race. That's why the seventh man who gets up front is capable of throwing his life away for an ideal. It's the one noble thing about War, that."

"But in general," Anne watched the waiter pouring 'Château-Olivier' into her wine glass, "it's they who are brave, and we who eat the partridges."

"Not necessarily," said Greenbaum. "Almost any rotter here *could* be the seventh."

...

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BOOK III

"Ye are men no longer but less and more,
Beast and God."

RUPERT BROOKE.

"O Lord, I must not cry,
And yet mine eyes contain
Such floods of scalding tears
That they will never dry,
Descending soft as rain,
Through all the coming years."

THOMAS F. COAKLEY.

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BOOK III

NIGHT. The railway carriage was in semi-darkness. Outside the black, wet night gathered in fog against the window. Drops trickled downward... Anne pulled her cape about her. Travelling... Travelling at last, alone... It was as if a prison door had opened... She settled back, luxuriously, in her corner. Alone, at last... Thank God... In the middle seat, opposite, a French officer sat, hunched down in his military great-coat, sleeping. The line, that care had drawn across his forehead, deepened... In the corners by the door a French husband and wife sat opposite each other, respectable, bored, sleepy... Opposite, a young Russian officer, slim, svelte, in his flat-breasted uniform of grey-green, one long leg in a high, black boot, resting across his knee. Long, delicate, white hands clasped the upraised knee. His finger nails were manicured and shining. He looked at Anne. One of the long hands went under the blouse, pulled out a gold cigarette case. He held it toward her:

"Une cigarette, Mademoiselle?" So she was travelling alone, this,–

"No thanks," said Anne. Adventure, lurking in the man's eyes... A good time not to know French...

"A-ah!" The Russian raised mobile eyebrows toward his sleek hair. The long fingers put the gold case back under the grey blouse. The dark eyes turned to the window, infinitely bored... So, the woman wasn't,–

Anne leaned her head back, half closed her eyes. Freedom... Adventure, hovering... The click, click of the rails under the wheels... American officers in the next carriage, laughing. There was a French girl with them, short-haired, with painted, red lips. Anne had paused in their doorway when she got in, considering whether to sit there or here... Better here, with the sleepy French... The woman's laughter in the next carriage, mingling with the men's... Drowsy... Free, for a week... Free to sleep alone... Without twenty-six women talking, talking... Centuries since one had slept alone... When this war was over, never sleep any way but alone... The French officer snorted, groaned, opened his eyes and closed them, shifted himself. The line across his forehead deepened to a frown. 'Taisez-vous, méfiez-vous,' said a sign above his head. 'Les oreilles ennemies vous écoutent...'[1] The voices of American officers were speaking haltingly, in French, in the next carriage... 'Taisez-vous...' Rails, clicking... A flat wheel, bump-

[1] 'Do not talk. Be on your guard. Enemy ears are listening to you.'

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ing, underneath you... Bumping toward Paris... No windows open... Air, thick, getting thicker... A Russian, opposite, staring... Anne yawned, her mouth wide open. He turned his head away. American men, quite human,– three in the next compartment with a cocotte ... But American women,– Mon Dieu...

...

Blue lights, making splashes in the pale mist... Tracks whirling past in semi-darkness... Engines whistling like frightened screech owls... Anne wiped the window, peered out. A chain of flat cars, covered with artillery, painted brown, and green, under a green light... The little Frenchman in the corner rubbed his hand against the window, looked out. More blue lights, touching the mist. Something seemed to be closing in about one... 'Les environs de Paris.' The little Frenchman subsided, closed his eyes. In the corner opposite, the Russian officer slept, mouth open, one high cheek bone resting against the wall, his sleekness fallen from him. On his long chin a beard had begun sprouting... Anne gazed at moving greyness... Flashes of blue... Mystery... Paris... War...

...

"Won't you let me help you off?" An American soldier stood in the narrow corridor, smiling down with gentle brown eyes. "Thank you," said Anne. He picked up both her bags, slinging his own small knapsack, across his shoulder. He had been on a detail at Bordeaux to sort the Christmas mail he told her. Was going back to his own hospital in the north. They made their way up a long stairway. Nice boy, this... He found an ancient horse cab for her. "Let me take you to your hotel," he said. "It will be on my way..." Anne paused a second. Nice eyes... Decent... You could tell by men's eyes...

"Yes," she said, "get in."

...

The musty cab lurched across the Pont-Royal in the blue dawn. A pale mist rising from the river... Dark, turgid water, flowing... The old, stone quais, pale yellow... Purple shadows under the arched bridges... Everything, somehow, just the right size... Against the pink sky to the east the towers of Notre Dame... Everything, somehow, just the way you'd known it would be... Paris...

"You must see the Sainte-Chapelle," said the boy, "and Chartres. See, there's the Louvre! And here, where you see the statue, this is where Joan of Arc was wounded once outside the walls of Paris. The English were holding Paris back in those days."

"She had a new idea, Joan," said Anne. "Nationalism. She was the beginning of all this."

"And we've got a new idea," said the boy. "Internationalism. Haven't we? Sometimes," he frowned a little, "I think Paris is smiling at us. Thinking we're childish."

"You really believe we have a new idea?" said Anne.

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"Yes, but most of us don't know it. I guess Joan's soldiers didn't know they had one, either."

Clop, clop, into the rue Saint-Honoré. Before shop windows, women were pushing up iron shutters. Women, piling fresh vegetables on carts. Clear water, flowing from a hydrant through the gutters. An old man swashing it, with a witch's broom, onto the pavement. The top stories of the houses shining, golden, in the new sun... In the shadow, the wet street shining, purple.

"The street they drove the tumbrils through," said the boy. "I expect some of those Revolutionary people forgot they were fighting for a new idea, too. There's so much sordidness in war, you *do* forget the Idea. I've been forgetting it, sorting the mail at Bordeaux. Every now and then you have to stop and remind yourself that the Idea's greater than your fool job." The cab lumbered into the courtyard of the Hotel Saint John and Sedbury. "Will you dine with me tonight Miss,– America?" the boy said. Anne looked at him. Why not? Life was short,– and you could only go to one war...

"Thanks," she said. "I'd like to."

...

The lobby was quiet and carpeted in crimson. A broad stone stairway wound upward, a soft path of crimson carpet in its center. A grand old stairway, made for ladies in brocades and powder... Down it, today, came two girls in trig, grey uniforms, woolen stockings, boys' shoes. It was as if they owned the grand old stairway... They looked at Anne. "Evelyn!"

"Anne!" Evelyn Tollet rushed at Anne, shook hands, introduced a pretty Miss Somebody from Iowa. There had been a time, long ago, when Anne had been sent to a Student Government Convention at another college. A lanky girl, with brown eyes, a draggled green corduroy skirt, had met her at the station,– Evelyn Tollet. "We're in a thing called the Y.M.C.A." Evelyn's eyes were serious. They were always serious when she talked of her job... "Pershing has asked 'em to take over all the post canteens. They've got a lot of ministers over here, and now they've got to run grocery stores. They're going to try girls to help. They're trying us." She stepped out into the courtyard, backing away, still talking. "Hope we'll get our orders to get out of here today," she said. "Been stuck here two weeks. If we don't get 'em, we'll tea with you at Smith's. You may have to pay for it, we're both broke." Shouting louder as she backed off...

"Want some money?" called Anne. "They pay me huge sums,–"

"Oh, no. We're all right." The two turned, swung off, shoulder to shoulder. Heads appeared at open windows on the courtyard, waked by the echoing voices. Above the last row of high, mysterious windows, a patch of sky shone blue, white clouds, scudding across it... Outside, the courtyard, Paris... Anne turned, went into the hotel. A

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bath,– knees trembling at the idea... It would be the first in six months...

...

The rue Saint-Honoré. Anne walked out, slowly, still tingling from the cold water in that great tub. Alive in every muscle... What else mattered? The coffee had been black, and strong and full of chicory, no milk, no sugar... The bread brown, crisp,– no butter... It was war, the femme de chambre had said, as she set the tray down... What did it matter? You were free at last, and this was Paris...

Dresses, in shop windows,– soft and colored. Anne stopped. Were there then still women who wore pretty dresses? If only you could buy one, put it on, recapture the anonymity of a civilian... She looked at her reflection in the plate glass. Ugly hat. Silly cape, flapping behind your shoulders... Through the glass, handkerchiefs, diaphanous, frail things with colored borders... Anne stepped in, chose one, stuck it into her military pocket, its green corner showing. Nice to have just that little corner pretty...

Hats. Heavens... Velvet, shining in deep folds... That one of maroon would look well,– What had got into her? First time she'd ever wanted nice clothes... Lace fans, with sticks of tortoise shell and pearl... Would there ever be a time again for things like,– Lamps, with shirred, pink shades, gold fringe... Lamps that would give a soft light... Lamps, in a world of blaring electric bulbs... Chairs, with soft, taffeta cushions, in a world where chairs did not exist... Underclothes. Soft, filmy things, made with embroidery and pale pink ribbons... Ah, that was one thing you could,– They couldn't see your,– A bell clanged as she pushed the shop door... 'Combien?' Anne pressed the soft package under her arm. Lovely things, inside an old newspaper...

The Place Vendôme. Why, it looked just like the etching in the hall at Downham,– Napoleon, reviewing his troops before that house there... Napoleon's column, towering... Made of cannon... Napoleon had fallen... Anne walked past the column. The things of war, behind you... The rue de la Paix ahead... Pearls, diamonds, emeralds, opals, gleaming behind glass windows... Anne paused, hungry eyes feasting. Queer... Never before had she had any desire for jewels... Crystal phials of perfume. Oval cakes of soap, wrapped in crimped paper... 'L'ambre... Muguet... Verveine...' She went into the shop. Soft carpet... Little tables of gilt, covered with glass... Hangings of taffeta, peacock blue and gold... Girls in grey costumes... She sat down at a table, bought a small cake of soap that smelled deliciously of almond ... And a large, round one, smelling of verbena... Wicked... Soap, at Downham, had always been white or green, entirely pure and smellless... 'Mademoiselle n'a pas besoin de parfum?' [1] No, Mademoiselle had no need. Anne smiled. Her mother considered it a little bit im-

[1] 'Mademoiselle has not need of perfume?'

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moral even to put powder on one's face... She sniffed her little packet, with its gold seal... Wicked... Delicious...

'Hello, Anne!' A tall officer was shaking her hand, a girl in a French nurse's coif patting her shoulder... Eliot Emerson and Lucy, cousins, from home... 'Lunch with us! Come on! We're going to the bank and then we're going to Larue's...' Familiar people... Like coming from the cold to a warm fire... 'What's that you've got on your feet, Eliot?' Anne, laughing. Eliot was a chaplain of a base hospital somewhere... 'Ah!' Eliot flourished his riding whip. 'That's my new spurs. I've discovered in Army Regulations that chaplains are mounted. This,–' he touched a bit of leather on his instep, 'is to keep the stirrup from rubbing the boot.' 'But have you got a horse?' said Anne. 'Our chaplain,–' Eliot, laughing... 'No, of course not, silly!' Everyone laughing, walking arm in arm... 'It's a great war...'

...

Books... Anne hung over the counter at Smith's. Books in English ... That one could read, read... Bury one's soul in... The rue de Rivoli outside... People in uniform, walking up and down, laughter, clatter of horses' hoofs, fading... Slipping... Hip bones, braced against the counter, hurting... No matter, so long as one could read... 'Alice in Wonderland'... She bought it, to take with her... War books. She edged past them,– a lot of bunk that people wrote in letters... Publishers didn't realize the censor made you leave out the real stuff... Kipling,– that was what you wanted,– he put the heart of war in... The lilt, the rhythm, women... Emerson's essays, 'History,' 'Self-Reliance,'– you'd lived by those in college... 'Life only avails, not the having lived. Power ceases in the instant of repose; it resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state; in the shooting of the gulf; in the darting to an aim... Do not spill thy soul; do not all descend; keep thy state; stay at home in thine own heaven... Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment...'

"Here she is! Anne! Come on! I've got a gang upstairs..." Evelyn Tollet, pulling her by the arm. "Come on, silly!" she cried. "C'est la guerre!"

"Oh, yes. I'd forgotten," Anne turned, book in hand. "I've got to buy this..."

...

The room was long and low and filled with people. People talking, laughing. Americans and British, sitting at tables. Uniforms... Cigarettes... Tea... A cheerfulness,– a spirit,– everyone young and happy,– Evelyn led Anne toward a table near a low, arched window.

A girl there, with a familiar, plump back, sandy-red hair. Why, that was Joan Porter... Anne's cousin,– they'd studied shorthand together in that last, restless year between college and the war... 'Learn some damn, silly trick,' Geoffrey had used to say, 'that's what gets you

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to War...' "Joan!" Anne bent and kissed her, thumping her shoulder. Good old Joan... Looking awfully well dressed, somehow, and spruced up... Used to be a social worker... Used to be always putting straggling hair back with her left hand... Her hair now, all neat and waved and netted...

"This is Lieutenant Monks, Anne. We work together at Aviation," Joan said. A tall, slim man with heavy, black eyebrows and a black moustache rose and shook hands. A French flare to the man's uniform coat, light whipcord trousers, dark riding whip, bright spurs... He sat down, talking to Lucy Emerson who was next him. The girl from Iowa was there, and Eliot,– Anne sank into a seat next Eliot. 'Thought I looked pretty swell,' he whispered, 'till I saw our aviator friend here. Wonder how they get away with whipcords?' Talk... Monks, ordering the tea, in rapid French. 'He studied at the Beaux-Arts,' Joan, explaining... Joan's eyes, admiring this tall, smooth creature... Calling him 'Monkey'... He, looking at her,– as if he owned her... Joan, blushing, laughing... Anne didn't like the man's face,–

"Look here, Miss Wentworth," his black eyes on her, "why don't you chuck that old hospital, and come and work with us? The Colonel's looking for secretaries that he can trust, at Aviation."

"Yes, do!" Joan, pleading, "come and see the Colonel tomorrow. He's *such* a peach, Anne!"

"But I belong to the Medical Corps," said Anne. "My job's,–"

"No matter," said Evelyn Tollet, "nobody's job is indispensable in war. Go see this Colonel! You might get a move, Anne. Moving's the only thing that keeps you from going crazy in the army."

"'Thank goodness, we're going away from here tomorrow," said the girl from Iowa. "We've got our orders at last,–"

"You *want* to leave Paris?" said Anne. Paris, the mecca,–

"Of course! We're dead broke," Evelyn laughed.

"Everyone that's stuck in Paris, Anne," said Lucy, "wants to get out,–"

"And everyone that's out there," Eliot, laughing, "wants to get in."

"C'est la guerre!" Monks said...

...

"A monsieur who waits for *me?*" said Anne. "What?" She lay on the bed in Evelyn Tollet's room at the Hotel Saint John. Evelyn, combing her brown hair before the mirror that topped the marble mantel... Telling how hard you worked, when once you got out... 'Il y a un monsieur,' repeated the small boy, 'qui attend Mademoiselle là-bas, au bureau.' "Oh, yes," Anne rose slowly. "I did meet a boy on the train this morning. What an idiot I was to say I'd,–"

"Not at all," said Evelyn. "War consists in eating dinners with strange young men. Go on!"

"Good Heavens!" Anne said...

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The boy stood in the hall. Anne watched him as she walked silently down the great stair on the red carpet. After all, he was all right... His uniform baggy, ill fitting,– but he himself shone... He'd bathed and shaved and made himself clean... 'Ah! Here you are! I was afraid I'd never see you again...' They walked out together. 'There's a place in the rue Duphot,' he said, 'where you get lobster...' Black darkness... Somewhere at a corner, a blue light, under a heavy metal shade, cast a dim radiance on the rain that fell around it. Your feet could feel the sidewalk... Your fingers, touch the metal shutters of the closed shops... 'Better take my arm,' said the boy, 'not get lost.' Anne slipped her hand across the rough, damp khaki. Nice to have a strong arm,– You could not see him... Only hear his voice, his footsteps, walking...

A bright place on the sidewalk... Waiters, bustling about, opening oysters. Faint smell of sea salt... 'Here we are.' They made their way into the entrance. Waiters, hurrying with plates of oysters ... 'Pardon, Madame...' People edging toward a narrow stairway... Paris... White panelled rooms... A rosy light, that touched the walls, that glowed from people's faces. Men and women at little tables, facing one another... Talking quietly... Laughing... Eating... Enjoying Life... War... Mystery... Anne smiled. No one in all the world knew where she was... Even the boy did not know her name...

"It was good of you to come." The boy rested his elbows on the table, clasped his hands. "How did you dare?"

"Your looks," said Anne. "One cannot camouflage what one's like."

"No. But one can change. One can change rapidly in places like Bordeaux. If I'd stayed at Bordeaux much longer,–" The boy stopped, looked at the tablecloth. "Yet it's just about as bad up where I'm going," he went on. "I'm at a base hospital up yonder. Joined it because someone told me that when I got here, I could transfer to the Air Service. You can't,–"

"I know. I've seen others try that," Anne said. British officers at the table next them... In the corner, a Frenchman with the loveliest lady Anne had ever laid her eyes on... Across from him, an Ambulance driver with a French girl... People, talking in low voices to one another... Eating good food... Life,– an extraordinary taste between your teeth... A flavor... You hadn't known It before...

"You know what ward tenders have to do," the boy said. "You know what the enlisted men's jobs round a base hospital are... They make you physically sick. You forget all the objects of the war. Forget everything except that you have to empty swill until your back aches, or,– do other things for fellers that curse you for a coward for staying back there... Then when you do get time off there's nothing to do with it except to go and get a drink somewhere. You've got to buy a drink, in France, to sit down,–"

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"I know," said Anne. "No chairs,–"

"And you can't speak to a woman. Because you're a soldier, the nurses rank you, so you can't talk to 'em,–"

"Not much to talk to," said Anne. "I sleep with twenty-six, all talking,–"

"It isn't what they might say," said the boy. "It's, it's,– Well, I've never specially wanted to talk to women, until I got into this fix where I couldn't. It makes you think you've got to. And there are no respectable women except the nurses. Oh, I suppose in the end I'll go to pieces, like they all do,–"

"It's queer the way you want things that you can't have," said Anne. "I wanted every pretty dress I saw today."

"It's worse than that with men," the boy was serious. "It's,– it's awful! You don't know!" He shook his head. The girl's eyes... She understood, then... She did know...

"This is the best lobster Newburg I ever tasted," said Anne. The boy laughed.

"It's a great war!"

...

"Here. Take these. I want you to have them." The boy held out two large, French coppers. He stood opposite to Anne in the dim light of the hotel courtyard. 'Why?' The boy smiled. "They're what was left over from the dinner," he said. "Right now, I feel as if I'd like to give you everything I've got!" Anne held out her hand. The boy dropped the two big copper coins into it. "Thank you," she said. "I,–" But he was gone.

...

New, French apartment house of cream-colored stone. Before the windows balconies, carved balustrades around them... Above the entrance on the Avenue Montaigne, the Stars and Stripes hung, idly. Under it an American soldier stood guard. He stopped Anne. Oh, she wanted to see the Colonel, did she? He led her in to a small room. Two women sat behind a table. One, like some bright-eyed bird, looked out from under a mass of curly, short black hair. She leaned forward, her elbow on the table, her chin across her hand, her head thrust forward. The other woman was tall, light-haired. Her dress of black satin, hung from her shoulders in a strange, new fashion. No 'waist line' at all... She lolled back in her chair, looking at Anne, tolerant, amused... Then she gazed at the other woman, who was still leaning forward. 'Did you want something?' the dark woman, speaking...

"To see Miss Porter," Anne said.

"Ah! I see. Wait a moment. Sit down. John! Oh, John!" An American soldier dodged in from the hallway. "John, deary, go up and tell Miss Porter there's a lady here. There's a good boy!" Anne smiled. A military headquarters, or a boarding school, which? 'Yes, Ma'am.' John grinned, came to a military salute, went out. Anne

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could see him, through the glass doors, leaping two steps at a time up the stone stairs. The little, dark woman sat down on her table, her back to Anne, her feet up in her chair. The black hair made a barbaric, fan-shaped halo at the top of her neck. 'I told the Colonel I wished he'd get an apartment near us,' she was saying, 'I think he'll get so awfully lonely out in Passy...'

"Anne! How wonderful! You've come!" Joan burst in. The exotic flavor of the place melted before her. She stood for the respectability of home, Joan. Of people you knew... Her old-fashioned clothes... Her frank face... "Have you met these people?" she was saying. "This is Miss Featherstone,"– the dark one,– "and this is the Marquise. They run the whole place." Joan led Anne upstairs. "Oh, Anne, I'm so glad you've come. I know you'll like the Colonel." Anne followed, silent. If a Major could be so damn military, what would a regular army colonel,–

"Gosh!" she said, "I'm scared..."

...

He was a large man, with a high forehead, heightened by middle age. He jumped up, smiling, and came round his desk, holding his hand out: 'So glad to see you...' A hand that squeezed yours... Why, this man was *really* glad to see you... Kind eyes... Nice teeth that showed when he smiled... A mouth,– something soft and red about the mouth when he stopped smiling... You felt a little doubt about that soft mouth... The Colonel was showing Anne how nice the view was from the balcony... Telling how, on a fine day, the sun would stream in through these tall windows... It took the French to know how to make good windows... So,– they agreed on windows... Anne smiled. A colonel,– why did the old Major at the hospital think he had to be such a grouch, then? In the corner, before a typewriter, a pretty girl sat. Girl with a pale face, and lightish hair that curled round her face... Blue eyes that stared, childlike, at Anne,– long lashes with turned-up ends that dropped, suddenly, toward the soft cheeks. Pink lips, that pouted a little when the Colonel called her. 'My secretary...' The girl shook hands feebly... 'How j'oudo?' The Colonel pulled up an armchair for Anne. He tipped his swivel chair back, putting the fingers of his soft, white hands together.

"What we're thinking about, Miss Wentworth, is to push the whole, big game along. That's what we're here for. That's the one thing that matters. I believe you'd be doing more toward that here than you could down there at Bordeaux. Colonel Duncan, the Chief Surgeon, was a classmate of mine at the Military Academy. If you say so, I'll write and ask him to transfer you." Anne looked at the horse-chestnut trees outside the window. Leave the old Major, with his militarism, his bombast... He didn't mean it, really... A decent sort, the Major... 'Lots of work here,–' The Colonel, looking at her... Work,– after months of sitting, doing nothing...

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"Yes," said Anne slowly, "if you think it's the right thing to do, I'll come..."

...

The hospital... Now that she was not to go back, Anne longed for it. The road, that led through fields, out toward the towers of the Black Prince... The golden vineyards... Evening light,– tall, spreading pines against it... The vivid green of grass, the gold of grape leaves. Anne wandered on the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne. Crowds walked there. French bonnes, pulling children, by the hand toward their suppers,– curly heads under bright berets, legs in leather leggins, clear, high voices, talking,– rolling big R's. Anne watched them. You had to have a niche in which you fitted... That was it,– some place to go back to,– where people knew you... Belonging somewhere... A place, that was familiar... The long corridor at night, with the lights low... Night nurses, cooking feasts for the young doctors. The cloister past the garden,– smell of dampness on magnolia leaves... Past the operating room,– a whiff of ether... The smell of chemicals from Greenbaum's laboratory... Better to belong at a hospital than to belong nowhere...

A new life, going to begin on Monday. But there were many hours before Monday. Two American officers saluted as they passed her. That was nice. It made you feel less lonely...

Home... The hospital had never been home. At home you were used to things, used to people, and they stayed there... Here, you grew used to things and people, and they went away,– or you did... Found yourself drifting... Longing to cling to something... Home... God. She walked on faster into the pink light of sunset. If you could keep on going westward under that golden sky, until,– The door, at home ... The parlor,– it would be tea time,– the kettle steaming on the low table by the fire... Her mother, sitting on the sofa, by the fire,– She stopped. Stood still on the broad sidewalk among the crowds that walked there. Slowly she turned from the pink light. Mustn't think,– It might be years,– Safe to think of hospitals, yearn for them... It was a yearning that would never bowl you over. But this other,– Danger... Push it back, whenever it came up... Push it fiercely, lest it break you... And when the hour came to write, be cheerful... Always cheerful. They must not know that anyone at the Great War could weaken... She sat down on an iron chair. People passed, talking to one another. French, Portuguese, Italian, English... An old woman came up, and asked for 'deux sous'... You couldn't even sit, then,–

"Say, you an American?"

"Yes." She looked round at a large, tough-looking soldier on the next chair.

"Say, a feller cert'ny does get lonesome in this here town. These here French girls, they can't understand a word you say. All they want is to let you know what *they* mean. No doubt in the world 'bout

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what they mean... Say, I thought I was lucky to get sent down here, but I been here five days now, and I wish they'd send me back up to my outfit. Lonelier'n Hell around here, I mean, I mean," he stammered.

"That's the way I feel, too," said Anne.

"It ain't nothin' where you are," said the soldier. "It's who you're with. Gotta be with a outfit. Gotta have somebody round that calls you a name, even if it's on'y 'Slim' or somethin'. A feller likes to be with a outfit he knows."

Anne rose. Like to ask this man home to dinner... No place to ask him... Couldn't... Both tossing on a vast sea... She held her hand out. "Good-bye." She paused a minute. "Slim," she added. Ridiculous, – that would be in the old life... The soldier, grinning...

"It sure is good to see an honest to God American woman," he said. His hand hurt hers. He watched her walk away, the grey cape swaying... Like to follow her... Hell, like to,– gotta have somebody to talk to in this goddam town... He turned to a French girl on the next chair.

"Promenade?" he said...

...

Anne walked down the rue Saint-Honoré that evening next to a Canadian lieutenant. The man had come from the British front that day. He was enjoying Paris,– you could feel it... Ahead, through deepening dusk, Monks walked with Joan Porter, arm in arm. The man next Anne moved with a springing motion, rising on his toes with each step. Anne kept time to the rhythm of the stick he carried.

"I say, it *is* wonderful not to have mud about your feet." He bounded. "Extraordinary to be able to walk free!"

"It must be," said Anne.

"Oh, yes! You could stick the rest of it, if it weren't for the mud. You do get a bit fed up on it after you've been up there two years." Anne looked at his clean profile. Tired lines about the man's eyes. Grey hairs by his temples... A young man yet, somehow, not young,–

"Do you get homesick?" she asked.

"Used to. You mustn't let yourself think about home when you first come. Then after a while home gets so distant that it's like people in a book. It gets to be a sort of an academic interest. Life's one thing. Home's another. It would be a bit hard, I expect, to go back." Anne was silent. Hard to go back... What did the man mean?

"Oh, would it?" she said.

...

The duck was small and round of breast. The waiters exhibited 'him' before they cut 'him.' His breast they carved in neat, red slices and laid them on a platter. The rest of him they put in a silver press, turning a wheel until the bones crunched... A chafing dish, wine,

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things from many bottles, with these they made sauce. The duck came, steaming, on a silver platter. The sauce,– they tasted it.

"Oh, I say!" said the Canadian, his fork poised. Anne looked up at him. Tears in the man's eyes... Monks laughed:

"It's a great war!"

...

The opera was Werther. Anne sunk back in her seat as the lights in the great circle of the Opéra Comique grew dim. Luxury, to sit and lose oneself in music... Lose the war, lose everything... She glanced once at the Canadian by her side. In his eyes, once more, she saw absurd tears. "You don't know, what it means to be having a good time," he whispered. "You can't know,–" He sunk back in his chair. Americans couldn't understand... Their turn had not come... Ah, just to sit and listen, to enjoy... Life,– "By Jove!" Anne followed the man's eyes. Light from the stage shone on a woman in white satin in the first box. Her hair was light, the color of pale straw. It waved back, in long, smooth undulations from her forehead. Her face was of an alabaster whiteness, save for the red lips and the purple shadows about the long, dark lashes. Her eyes, under the lashes, moved among the audience below her... One white arm, rested along the red velvet of the balustrade... A long, slim hand that dangled,– on its forefinger a huge opal, gleaming... The woman raised the hand, leaned forward, resting her chin on its back. The long earrings, that dangled from under the pale hair, jiggled a moment, were still. She sat, motionless, her clear, white profile carving the shadows of the box behind her. In the shadows, a man... A French officer, who moved forward, seated himself behind her. Eclipsed behind the radiant beauty of the woman... That woman... Faces, in the rows below her, turning,–

"Look!" murmured Monks to Joan, "a hum-dinger in the box there!"

Joan held up glasses. "Do you think so?" she said.

"By Jove!" The Canadian shifted, uneasy, in his seat... Anne could hear his quick breath, coming, going... The woman in white sat, a pale goddess, rapt in music. As if she didn't feel the restlessness below her ... The faces, turning... The man behind her leaned forward, his elbows on his knees, face close to the white shoulder. The man's face,– Anne leaned forward. Familiar... A black moustache, eyes,– Why, the French officer in the box was Randolph... She sat back, looked at the stage. Why didn't she say, 'There's Randolph'? Why did she hope he wouldn't turn and see her? Why was she afraid, when they went out to get a lemonade between the acts, that they might meet him ... Nervous about what she should say if they should meet him...

They didn't. They were back in their seats, Anne looking straight ahead, the Canadian looking across her at the woman... Music... Music, filling the dark house... Anne's eyes turned to the box, drawn there... Randolph wasn't looking. He sat, resting his elbows on the

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balustrade, his eyes on the stage... The music of "Clair de Lune," floating out, growing, thrilling... Randolph's face turned toward the woman next him. She, leaning back, low in her chair, chin close to the white neck... The long lashes rose slowly... Their eyes met... Locked... Her red lips parted just a little... They sat, quite still, like this until the music faded...

"By God!" said the Canadian, "that fellow's lucky..."

...

Monday, at last. Anne got up. Good to be getting up to do a job again... This lying in bed for breakfast,– feeling Paris outside,– Trouble was, you didn't get up till lunch time... She washed. No more baths, they cost so... The Saint John was getting too expensive ... Have to look up that old lady that the Marquise said,– Have to hurry... It would take you twenty minutes to get to Avenue Montaigne... She turned from the Champs-Elysées at the Rond Point. Would be there at eight, sharp. They were pushing the Air Service with tremendous energy, Joan said... She hurried. The guard before the door at Number 45 Avenue Montaigne smiled at her. Anne said 'Good morning,' walked in. Almost used to guards now... Almost forgotten to think it funny that fifteen men should stand, doing nothing, all day long... Perhaps that was why things went so slowly in the army... You had to feed the fifteen, while the rest worked... The headquarters deserted... She went up the white stone staircase, down the scratched parquet floor of the hall, opened one of the wide, white doors into the Adjutant's Office. A soldier stood with a broom in the middle of the red plush carpet. Another sat on one of the mahogany desks, smoking a cigarette, dangling a duster.

"Ain't nobody in yet," said the soldier. "Won't be here till round nine. Half past nine if you want to see the Adjutant."

"Ten, more likely!" The other spat into the fireplace, began to sweep. "It's a great war!" he added.

...

Anne walked along the Champs-Elysées, waiting. The Arc de Triomphe shone yellow in the early morning sunlight. Down the broad side walk an American nurse came, scarlet cape flapping,– "Anne!"

"Angelina!" She kissed Anne, standing in the morning sunlight. "Say, Anne, we had a *won*derful time up front! You ought to go up front, Anne. You ought to see those poilus,– you do a dressing on 'em that almost kills them, and all they ever say is 'Oh, la, la!' You get a different idea of the French when you go up front."

"I'm glad," said Anne.

"Say, Anne, I saw Agnes Brophy last night at the station, goin' back. She's been livin' over in some little old hotel with Drennan. She'll be sent home,–"

"Do you suppose they'll find out?"

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"Bound to, when she gets back!" Angelina shook her curly head. "Gosh, Anne, you and I used to go blowin' off our heads about how our standard was better than the French one!"

"It *is* better. She's gone back on it,—"

"That's what I told her," said Angelina. "She said she didn't care. Said it was worth it. It wouldn't have made any difference with her, Anne, war or no war."

"But with Drennan," said Anne. "I rather think he'd have been an ordinary, serviceable husband if he'd stayed in the U.S."

"P'raps." Angelina scowled. "But I don't know. I've seen his kind round hospitals before now. He did it quicker over here, that's all. Well, anyway, our doctors are better than the French ones. I was watchin' one French doc givin' a patient ether. The patient was goin' bad. I poked the doc, 'n I said, 'Look out, look out! You've givin' him too much. He's gettin' black. La figoor,' I says, 'black, noir!' 'P-f-f-t!' says he. 'Un Boche!'"

"It's a great war!"

...

Anne turned back along the Avenue Montaigne. 'Say, Anne, I'll miss you awful!' Angelina's voice rang... American officers, now, hurrying along the gravel under the horse-chestnuts... Anne quickened her pace. This would be real war... Shining spurs on the officer ahead ... Sun, gleaming on the riding whip in his hand...

...

A field clerk sat behind a big desk in the Adjutant's office. They called him 'Brock.' He was a slim, anæmic person, with a bad cold. His hand was limp inside Anne's when she shook it. "Pleased to meet you..." The limp hand went right back to sorting papers... Along his desk,— ten baskets full of papers... "I don't see where that letter went," he said. "It's the thing the Kernel ought to see first..."

"Lettice might know," said a soldier, in the corner. "She had it Sat'dy..."

"Yes, Lettice might know," Joan said, sharpening her pencils. She took notes, she explained to Anne, each day at a meeting of the chiefs of the divisions. Anne must learn to do this, so they could take turns ... Lettice was the Colonel's Private Secretary,— the pretty girl, in the corner of his office, yes... "What letter was it that got lost?" Joan asked.

"Translation of a letter from the French Ministry of War, saying that our request for 12 Breguet planes had been refused. Saying they hadn't got any Breguet planes. Our scout at their factory says they just built sixty... Say, anybody remember anything else it said? It might have got filed under something else."

"You can be pretty sure it said that they assured us, my dear sirs, of their most distinguished consideration. It might have got filed under 'consideration,' Brock..." Everyone laughed...

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"It's a great war," said the soldier in the corner...

...

"Hello Count, come in! Pull up a chair!" A tall, slim young Frenchman, in the black and red uniform of a French sergeant of artillery stood in the door, saluting. His cap at the angle of men who play good polo,– "This,"– Brock waved his hand toward the figure in the doorway, "is the Dook of Burgundy and Montmorency. Dook, shake hands with Miss Wentworth. The Dook runs the Colonel's automobile." His long, flabby hands went back among the papers...

"Mademoiselle!" An impressive bow from the young Frenchman. He sat down next Joan Porter, heaved a deep sigh... 'He really is a count, you know,' Joan, saying... "Mademoiselle parle français?" The young man leaned toward Anne.

"Slightly."

"Ah, Mademoiselle, will you have the goodness to explain to M. le Colonel, on my part, that I have today received a letter from the commander of my regiment, who tells me to return to the front. I am pilote, you understand, and I am blessé. I fell,– une vrille,– of many thousand metres. I landed in a tree. It is that tree, Mademoiselle, that saved my life. Now they want to make me fly again. I cannot fly, Mademoiselle! If I fly, the first time that I shall mount, puif! I shall fall, and this time I shall be killed. O!" he waved a long, white hand before his face, "J'ai le cafard..."

"You tell 'em, Dook!" said Brock.

"What's the cafard?"

"Stay over here long enough, and you'll get it," said Brock. "It's the feelin' you get between times, when you *ain't* havin' a good time..."

"Be good enough, Mademoiselle," the young Frenchman, earnestly, – did not his life, his happiness, depend on this?– "to insist before the Colonel that he should write to the Ministère de la Guerre immediately! He has need of me, Mademoiselle. I know Paris. I can conduct him to the,– endroits où l'on s'amuse,– quickly, in the obscurity of the streets. Intercede for me, Mademoiselle!" The young man smiled, laying his hand over his heart. "Mademoiselle est charmante. Un galant homme ne refuse jamais rien à une jolie femme!"

"Gosh," said Anne, "what's his game?"

"Oh, this same thing happens about every three weeks," said Joan. "Yes, I'll remind the Colonel, André. Je lui dirai. Run along." The Count rose, made a deep bow, turned in the doorway, saluted three times, palm outward.

"Vive la France!" said Brock...

...

"Say," said Brock, "give me that!" Anne reached down for the piece of paper that she had thrown in the waste-basket. She was transcribing a report on Liberty Motors.

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"It's nothing," she said. "I made a mistake,– I'm starting the page over,–"

"When you got things like that to write, you don't put your mistakes into the waste-basket." He held a match below the piece of paper. Anne watched the flames curl.

"Oh!" said Anne, "I see..."

...

"Major Salmon's yelling for a stenographer. You might go find him." Brock watched her going. How the girl did hurry...

The Major was a fat man, bald on top. He sat with a cigar clamped between his teeth. Across from him sat a captain, reading the 'Paris Herald.' "Morning." The Major rotated the cigar, shuffling his papers, looking at Anne.' A new one, this one... The Captain lowered his paper, looked at her, held it up again. Nothing doing... "Good morning." Anne sat down. The Major's blouse wrinkled across his stomach...

"'Subject: Aviators' clothing,'" said the Major. "I'm in the clothing game, you know," he added. "Say, Chollie, how many of these gloves'd we better order?"

"Put in for five thousand," said Charlie, "and you'll get one." The Major rotated his cigar. A new stenog... Say, why couldn't they send him a good looker while they were at it... Anne bit her pencil.

"Five thousand?" she said...

...

Anne hurried back from lunch. Five minutes late,– French restaurants were so slow... The rue Marignan, this way,– hurry... There was Lettice, strolling, her arm hooked through that of the Canadian officer who was Monks' friend. The officer gazed at Lettice. She gazed at him. Their look lingered... Anne dashed past them, past the guard, ran up the stairs, opened the door breathless, apology all formed. The office, empty. Brock sat alone, his chair tipped back, his head against the wall, arms and legs dangling. His hair had made a little grease spot on the white wall... He twisted his head, looked at her.

"Back already?" he said. "Well, guess I'll go out. We try to keep somebody in here all the time, in case Chaumont should call..." He put on his cap.

"Who's Chaumont?"

"Chaumont is G.H.Q. Where Pershing hangs out." Brock smiled. Didn't this girl know anything?

"Is Pershing likely to call up while you're out?"

"He might," said Brock...

...

Anne sat, glancing at the reports in the baskets on Brock's desk. Drowsy,– That red wine... 'The American Air Service hoped to have ready by July 1, 1918, the following planes...' Wonder if there's

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anything up between Joan and Monks? '2,000 Bristol planes...' He treated her like an older sister, but she... '5,550 De Haviland IV's or IX's,'– what could they want so many planes as that for? Joan never had been so well dressed,– '1,250 Caproni and Handley Page.' Joan brought sandwiches in a tin box for his afternoon tea... '22,500 Liberty motors...' The war was going to last for twenty years, then...

"Such a good lunch, escargots de Bourgogne,–" Anne's head jerked, eyes opened. Joan and Monks had drifted in, were standing smiling, gazing at one another... "Château Latour," said Monks. They sat down, pulled out the drawers of the mahogany desks, and put their feet up. "You know I like Château Latour as well as Beaune at lunch..."

"Erfs Alma! Can't be beat!" The soldier, who sat at the desk in the corner, hung his hat up, sat down. "Ever eat one of them, Lootenant?" Lettice drifted in, followed by the Canadian. They sat against Brock's desk. The Canadian folded his arms, looked down at the others. "We certainly did have good Brussels' sprouts for lunch..." he said. Talk... On and on... All about food... At three-thirty the Adjutant came in. Monks and the Canadian got up.

"Food will win the War!" said Monks from the doorway.

"Tea at four-thirty," called Joan...

...

Lunch time, a week later. Anne strolled along the rue Marbeuf. What was the use of being back before the others? No hurry at all... A tall, young Frenchman in horizon blue came dashing round a corner, striding toward her. A verve about him,– like a lean, fine race horse... He looked up,– Randolph. Coming toward her... Randolph taller, thinner, a new moustache, legs in black gaiters, shining... A riding whip in his hand... "Hello!" Randolph stopped, mouth open. Good God... Anne? Here? Her boylike eyes on his... Looking right through him...

"Anne, honey! How are you?" He took her hand, pressed it, patted her shoulder. "I sure am mighty glad to see you!" He was blushing... "How's Geoff?" he said. "Where is the old son of a gun, anyway?"

There were so many things to be told,– couldn't he lunch? He had, it seemed, already made a date for luncheon... Dinner? They made it dinner... That would be fine... Anne strode off, hands in her pockets. His eyes had shifted when she'd asked him to lunch...

...

He stood and watched her. She disappeared around the corner. He waited a moment, dangling his riding whip. Then slowly he walked down the street, turned in at a doorway. 'Bonjour! Monsieur!' The concierge clipped his words. Randolph paused by the stairs. The concierge watched him. Monsieur had not the air so hurried as usual ... Ah, yes, after all, he had. Two steps at a time he bounded upward. Randolph rang at a door on the premier... A stout femme de chambre,

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opened it in a black dress, felt slippers, standing aside, bowing as he went in... He laid his cap, his whip down...

"C'est toi, mon ami?" The voice was music... He stepped to the double doorway of the salon, stood there. Room full of sunlight, sunlight that touched a yellow damask wall, fawn-colored carpet, sunlight that slanted between curtains of taffeta, blue and gold... Sunlight that played on dangling lilies in a Chinese bowl... From the bergère there rose a woman in pale blue, a gown that drifted,– a woman with hair the color of pale straw... Lace falling from white arms as she came forward, her long, slim, hands out... Randolph, in the doorway, hesitated. That other life, that had been... It had come back, suddenly, to interfere with this one... Hell, this was war! One must live. The Present...

"Amélie!" he said. He held his arms out...

...

Anne worked till seven. "We'll send out for a little dinner, and we'll go right on." The Colonel smiled across his desk. "Are you game?" "Sure," said Anne. She asked Lettice to telephone for her. Lettice's father was a merchant of English shoes in Paris,– she understood the French telephone. 'Allo, Mademoiselle,' she said fourteen times, and then, slowly, Anne heard her spell the message. That the pilote, who should be waiting for the American lady, should be told that the American lady regretted...

"Hell!" said Randolph, in the lobby of the Hotel Saint John. "She takes this war too seriously." Well, he'd dine alone and go to the Casino... Have to be early, though... Next morning, in the grey dawn, he'd be flying to the front at Saint-Just...

...

"Madame de Mourgues?" Anne asked a concierge, in a black smock. "Ici. Au deuxième," he grunted. Anne climbed a flight of polished oak stairs. In her hand she held a letter from the Marquise de Chasteigner, addressed to Madame de Mourgues. Madame de Mourgues, the Marquise had told Anne, kept a pension, quite like a private residence, where only members of the plus haute société de France lived... Madame was, in fact, her cousin, a daughter of the Duc de Saint-Hilaire, one of the oldest families of the north. She had married below her, a man from Amiens, who had gone into the cloth industry and who had unfortunately lost Marie's dot. Lost her dot, and then died, and left her,– with no money and the Château de Saint-Hilaire, and a crippled sister, Eveline, on her hands. Marie de Mourgues had done a radical thing, a thing much against the advice of her relatives, the noblesse, had rented the Château de Saint-Hilaire to rich Americans, had moved her sister to Paris, had rented an appartement in the Quartier Saint-Germain, and taken in pensionnaires. Her relatives of the Quartier Saint-Germain and of the northern noblesse had held up their hands in horror. They had avoided Marie until,– the Mar-

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quise de Chasteigner had laughed a little as she told Anne,– until the Germans drove them from their estates in the north. Then they descended on Marie, wanted to board there. She welcomed them, affectionately, as though it had been in the old days at Saint-Hilaire and they had come to the château for a week's hunting party... She took them in, and many times she arranged to get the money for their board from rich Americans, who had been her pensionnaires before the war. She entertained them as though it were in a private house. Ah, the Marquise felt sure, Anne would be comfortable if she could get a place at Madame de Mourgues'...

A door. A polished knocker. A maid, in a black dress, a crisp, white apron, a cap with starchy bows. Voices, as from a dinner party, coming from beyond... Madame was at table. Would Mademoiselle have the goodness to seat herself in the salon? In a long, dim mirror, Anne saw herself sit down. On faded yellow damask... Chair of Louis XV,– Here Madame de Pompadour might once have sat down... She should have been dressed like the Sèvres figures on the mantelpiece,– not in a uniform, not in men's shoes...

"Ah, Mademoiselle, I am so happy to meet one who comes from my friend de Chasteigner!" Anne looked up into a kind face with blue eyes and greying hair. A white face, with fine skin, wrinkled... Lines of sadness, of humor, of strength... "I am crowded, but will I arrange it," Madame was saying. "You will come tomorrow, you and your friend? That will be nice! We shall enjoy having Americans once more..."

"Thank you," said Anne.

...

Madame de Mourgues came forward, took them by the hand, led them about the salon the next evening. It was as if it were a dinner party in their honor... 'Permettez-moi de vous présenter ma cousine, Madame la Marquise d'Orbigny.' 'Madame la Comtesse d'Estrée...' 'Madame la Générale Béras...' Old ladies holding out feeble hands, as if to be kissed... Old ladies nodding, smiling, saying gracious words. For were not these young Americans come to save France? There were elderly French officers, in uniform. 'M. le Commandant Béras.' Bowing low over the hands of the jeunes américaines, even lower than they bowed over the hand of the old Marquise, for was it not very amusing to have these strange, boyish creatures appear, from the ranks of the outer barbarians,– into their world?

Anne and Joan Porter ate their dinner in bewildered silence. Before the conversation that fluttered toward them, they found themselves dumb. Thoughts, like iridescent soap bubbles, that floated into the air, and bumped together, and disappeared... After the coffee, in the grand salon, they rushed to their room. "Gosh," said Joan, between puffs of a cigarette, "d'you think we can make the grade, Anne? I thought I'd been well brought up, but now I,–"

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"There's Mademoiselle Eveline's beautiful face to look at when you feel low."

"Did you ever eat such food, Anne, as long as you lived?" Joan wriggled. "I can hardly wait to see the next meal!"

"C'est la guerre!" Anne said...

...

Randolph Pendleton tipped his chair back against the wooden wall of the barrack at Saint-Just. In front of him stood the long mess table of the pilots. Meal over, table littered... Opposite him sat Garlough, the pilot he roomed with, sipping cognac.

"It would be a damned sight better to tell Anne than to have her find out." Randolph blew smoke upward, put his hand out toward his wine glass. His hand shook. The other pilot watched it. Not surprising, after coming down in flames the way Pen had that afternoon ... God, what an hour they'd had waiting for him... Standing round the field in the dark, pooping up Vèry lights and... Getting nervous... Then Pen had telephoned, and they'd come out and got him. And now his hand shook...

"But wouldn't it put her off you for life to know?" Garlough lit another cigarette. "American girls, you know,–"

"She must know a thing or two by this time," said Randolph, "she's been in Bordeaux,–"

"Yeah, but American women don't understand things. That's why it's kind of nice to see one, once in a while over here. They act like they were home, and everyone was respectable and nice around 'em. It makes you feel respectable and nice to see one,–"

"Well,–" Randolph set his glass down. "One of these damned planes is going to burn me up one of these days. Or rather, it's not,– I'll never go again without a pistol,– but I reckon none of us are gamblin' much on livin'. Suppose I get killed, and they find out?"

"You'll be in your right mind tomorrow, old man. Have another drink, Pen,–"

Randolph got up, edged his way past between the chairs and the wall. "I was in my right mind when I came slippin' off that crawlin', wrigglin' flame up there, today. If I hadn't a side-slipped her all the way down, it would a got me. Burnin' don't appeal to me, somehow." The two walked out into the grey-black darkness. Rain fell, gently... A steady booming, over in the northwest...

"Well, tell her if you like," said Garlough. "We aren't any of us likely to get back, so it don't matter..."

"I wish I knew..." said Randolph...

...

"If only they didn't lie so," said Joan. "Why did the French Ministry of War tell us they didn't have Breguets, when we knew they had sixty?"

"They don't trust us," said Monks. He sat, with Anne and Joan

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in Madame de Mourgues' salon, their feet up to the white stove. "They've got squadrons at the front. They know what they can do. They don't know what ours can. Naturally, they give the planes to their men."

"Why don't they say so?" said Anne.

"Too polite," said Monks. "That's their way,—" A syren screamed outside the window. Dismally, it wailed off into distance. "Air raid," said Monks. He did not stir a muscle... There was a scurrying in the passages... Nervous, French voices... People putting lights out. They could hear Mademoiselle Eveline's wheel chair being pushed down the passage. Clémentine, the maid, put her head in the doorway. "Il faut descendre à la cave, Mesdemoiselles," she said. 'La lumière, là-bas!' A man's voice from the courtyard. Clémentine came in, put out the electricity: 'C'est le gendarme! Mon Dieu...' Joan lit a candle. They sat there, its wavering yellow light touching their faces. Candle light picked out the telling parts of faces... Anne watched Monks. Something she did not like in his face...

"If the house piles up on anyone, I'd rather be on top than at the bottom," Joan said.

"Torpilles go through a house, and thirty feet into the ground below it," Monks tapped a cigarette, took out a briquet,— A crash. Anne jumped and held her breath. Heart, pumping, pumping... Gooseflesh rising along your back, your arms... Muscles tense, moving, making you walk restlessly about the room... Wanting to run... Move somewhere... Get out... Monks snapped his briquet calmly. Joan laughed. "Well, that one didn't,—" Another crash, quite near them. In the silence there came another noise, a faint ker-bum, kerbum... Monks listened. "The barrage," he said.

"Let's go out," said Anne. "I'd rather get hit in the open."

They walked out onto the bridge that crossed the river. People, wandering, near you in the darkness... Above them, in the night sky, green lights, swimming... The green lights, a French officer, was explaining, came from the escadrilles de défense... All the world knew that the escadrilles de défense never touched anything... It arrived to them, sometimes, to be hit themselves, by shrapnel... The officer shrugged his shoulders, flung his palms out... "C'est la guerre!" he said...

Anne gazed at the moving lights above her. Men, up there, in the darkness, trying to kill you... Others trying to kill them... The sky, no longer an empty place you didn't have to think of... Human beings, skimming through the great dome... Shrapnel bursting, faint, like Roman candles, to the northward... Rain,— was it rain?— pattering on the sidewalk... She stooped, picked up a piece of metal that fell at her feet. "Come on," said Joan, "we're going under the bridge. He says it's safer..."

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Morning. Anne paused on the bridge, leaning against the stone rail. A tugboat churned upstream. The morning sun shone on the golden sand in her two barges. From the quai an old man trailed a fish line. Last night,– No connection between last night, and this morning... Life, not connected... A tennis ball, which somebody had tossed away... Bouncing, bouncing, bouncing up and down, touching earth, leaving it, touching and leaving, each bounce lower than the last one ... Some day, the ball would roll to an edge and tumble over... The hand that threw the ball was Home... The hard surface that it bounded on was War... The bounces, Youth, growing less buoyant... Bouncing lower each time...

...

"Lettice is engaged to that Canadian feller," said Brock. "Yup! She told me. He went back up front last night. Don't suppose she'll do any more work for a week now!" His long, loose-jointed hand went at the papers... He found one, walked out... Anne sat down. It had been the day after the pressed duck party that the Canadian met Lettice... She had come drifting in, in that grey dress of hers, while he stood waiting to see Monks. He had jumped when he saw her, moved, stopped himself, watched her, watched her... The color had played in her cheek... It was as if she felt him... Knew that he'd ask Monks to introduce him... Knew that he'd take her out to luncheon, that day, the next day, the day after...

The white door opened, and Lettice came in, her handkerchief in a wet wad in her small hand. Looking for Brock. He wasn't there. She sat down in his chair, the little hands clasped under her round chin, baby blue eyes gazing at the window. 'E 'ad been standing just 'ere when she first saw 'im... Such a fine fellow, so tall... On'y four days ago ... My 'eavens, it seemed a fortnight... After last night, comin' 'ome from the theatre in that taxi... She 'ad been afraid, durin' the air raid ... Just put 'er arm through 'is... And all of a sudden, 'e'd seized 'er an' kissed 'er... Such 'ot kisses... Ow! Then all of a sudden, while they stood there outside the fence of father's garden,– you could feel 'im,– well, all of a sudden 'e'd ast her if she'd marry 'im... Now, in the middle of the night,– 'ow could she? Next time... It would have to be the next time... Watch out, father's lookin'... 'All right, next time, sweetheart! Next time, sweetheart...' 'ow 'e did kiss... Lettice sighed.

"I hear you're engaged," said Anne. "Yes," said Lettice. She twisted the Canadian's seal ring on her third finger. 'E was gone... Tears in the blue eyes...

"Congratulations," said Anne, "I liked him." Brock came in. "Say, the Kernel's lookin' for you." The small, grey figure jumped up, found the wet handkerchief, disappeared through the glass door...

...

Lettice cried, sitting at her desk, in the corner of the Colonel's office. Laid her pencil right down across her book, and,– The Colonel got

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up from his great desk, came round, stood above her. His little grey mouse,– Damn that man, for making her unhappy... Her pretty dimple, vanished... Cheek all tear-stained under the gold hair... Her shoulder, shaking... 'She loved 'im, and 'e was gone to the f-f-f–' The Colonel put his hand down on the quivering shoulder. 'There, there, the Canadian would come back. No need to worry... Would she come out to lunch with the poor old Colonel? He was alone, too... There, there...' He stood, looking down, his hand on her hair, patting ... Soft hair... Have to get back that dimple... Why, Hell, that dimple there in the corner, helped him... Got him through his work... Helped the Game along... Have to get back that dimple...

...

"Merci, Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle est trop bonne!" Clémentine, the maid at Madame de Mourgues' smiled, pocketing Anne's two francs. She had bought wood for their fire, had their shoes mended. "It shall be for my husband when he comes home from the front. Ah, oui, Mesdemoiselles, he has been at the front for two years, and once he has been wounded." The pretty, brown eyes looked down, sadly. "Next week,–" she smiled again, "is his first real permission. Madame has promised me three days of 'sortie' and I have put aside a little money so that he shall amuse himself well."

"Bon! Bon!" Anne patted Clémentine's slim shoulder. Tears in the woman's great eyes. "That will be fine. I'm glad of that," Anne was saying...

...

Morning. Fifteen lieutenants were standing round the Adjutant's office. Nervous... Hadn't they gone without their breakfast to get here at nine, sharp? Arrived from the transport just last night... What was this girl doing, coming into this Army Headquarters, taking her hat off? Anne looked at them. Must be the bunch that they'd cabled for six weeks back... Wouldn't they sit? No. They were feeling far too military... Reporting for duty in France... The War, at last...

"How is America?" Anne dusted her desk. An eager young man, with boyish curly hair, earnest brown eyes, turned toward her. "It's awful," he said, in a low, hoarse voice. "Everyone wants to get over. Everyone goes without sugar, economizes, worries. Gee, I'm glad to get here! Say, how long does it take to get to the front, anyway? D'you think we'll get there by tonight? Barnaby's my name, Lieutenant Barnaby..." Anne smiled. "Takes more than a day to get an order," she said.

An hour later, the Adjutant came in. They stared at him. Hell, whipcord trousers? Flaring blouse, cut like a Frenchman... Sam Browne belt all covered with shiny brass hooks... Spurs... A nobby little whip... Gee, they'd stop on their way to the station,– get a whip like,– One of them stepped forward, very stiff, saluting: "Sir, Lieutenant Brown reports,–"

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"Be with you in a minute, Lootenant." The Adjutant whirled his swivel chair round, "Brock! Oh, Brock," he shouted. Fifteen minutes of finding papers, scuttling with them through a glass door, covered with silk curtains... The Adjutant dashed out. The lieutenants, watching... God, what trousers,– Army Regulations,– He dashed in again. Picked up a telephone,– queer little thing, all in one piece... 'Mademoiselle. Allo, Mademoiselle.' He stood, embracing the little mouthpiece, as if Mademoiselle was,– Mademoiselle Allo evidently was important... Good God,– The lieutenants turned, looked at a woman who came in, looked away, looked back. Legs... Say, if skirts were like that in the U.S.,– Black curly hair, all short, standing up from her neck behind in a half circle... Some gay Fijian... Eyes, gleaming at you from under a mane of black hair... She perched on the stenog's desk... Gosh, her knees showed... Knees, in the U.S., were,– Miss Featherstone turned her quick, birdlike glance toward Anne. "They want an automobile each day for Sergeant Smith?" she said, "what's that for?"

"To go to the Quartermaster's to get the candy and the cigarettes." Anne smiled.

"But must they have a car every day? Ah, here's the Adjutant. Chauncey!" She hopped down and ran forward... "Eunice!" Lind's hands went out. The militarism melted from his slim back. "What can I do for you, dear?" The lieutenants shifted. Good as a show, this... Girls, with legs... And short hair... The girl was arguing about sending a Cadillac for cigarettes and candy, each day. Why couldn't they get a big supply,– 'But the Sergeant can only get so many cigarettes per officer per day,' the Adjutant explaining, 'what else could they do? Now listen, darling, you won't get your candy...' Little Barnaby shifted from one leg to the other,– began to wish he'd stopped to get his breakfast...

The lieutenants had waited two hours when their turn came. They reported solemnly for duty with the A.E.F., Sir... Their chests squared, heads back. It meant a good deal to report for duty with the Expeditionary Forces... "Take their names, Miss Wentworth, will you?" The Adjutant turned to talk to Brock across his shoulder. Anne wrote...

"I guess that's everybody." Her head moved back and forth to see if she had noted all the eager faces...

"You all report tomorrow morning at ten," said the Adjutant. The fifteen paused, gaped at him. What? They weren't going to the front until tomorrow? O-oh, pshaw... They saluted, turned, filed slowly past Anne. She smiled at little Barnaby. The boy was too much disappointed to smile...

"Good Lord, Brock!" The Adjutant tipped his chair back, "What the Hell are we going to do with *that* bunch?"

...

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Letters. 'We're really in it now,' wrote Geoffrey. 'Feet wet all the time,– up to our knees in mud. Can't write anything about the army and can't see anything else. How is Paris? May exist, but doesn't seem as if it could be in the same world with all this mud and darkness. Just little towns, all ruined. I dream mostly about bathtubs steaming full of water. The bathroom at Downham,– nearly every night I walk through the door,– then something happens so I don't quite get there. Romantic!' Anne walked across the bridge. Geoffrey... Really in it... Really in it...

...

"Good morning!" Young Barnaby and the other fourteen new lieutenants walked in at quarter before ten. They carried riding whips. On their heels, bright spurs gleamed... When Anne mentioned chairs, they made for them, and sat down. They looked tired. "D'you think we'll get sent up front today?" Barnaby asked, eager. Anne didn't know,– travel orders took time... Had he seen much of Paris? He'd 'kind of walked round'... He blushed... The Adjutant strode in. It was as if he was surprised to see them. They jumped up. Now...

"Oh!" he said. "A-a-a, you fellers come back tomorrow at eleven." The Adjutant stepped round his desk briskly, sat down. He didn't look up at the fifteen as they moved toward the doorway. Barnaby stopped by Anne's desk. Going to ask her,– But she was talking to the field clerk at the next desk. 'Lettice still tearful?' she was asking. 'Just enough,' said the field clerk, 'to make her look real pretty...' Barnaby strode out. War... What in Hell did they want with all these women?

The Colonel asked Anne and Lettice out to lunch that day. There was a colonel down from G.H.Q. who must be kidded. The two colonels and the Adjutant and the two girls crossed the Champs-Elysées. 'Américains,' people murmured. A child, with fluffy curls, tossed a blue ball. She watched it as it rolled toward the Americans, who walked so fast... Colonel Henderquist picked up the ball, and, laughing, rolled it back. The little girl's shyness vanished. She beamed at the kind Colonel. Very gently the Colonel picked the child up, kissed her, set her down. They walked on, to the restaurant among the trees. The waiters saluted, ran round. 'Le Colonel de l'Etat Major de l'Aéronautique. Par ici, mon Colonel...' Chairs, being pulled out, napkins whipped from their folds... The Colonel from G.H.Q. sunk back next to Anne, rubbing his hands. Cinch these fellows had, after all, here in Paris... Good restaurants... And decent girls to talk to...

"My brother is in the Sixteenth Infantry. Do you know where it is?" said Anne.

"A damn good regiment. That's in the First Division," The Colonel smacked his lips over his vermouth. "Just relieved the French in the Toul Sector. You know," he leaned toward Anne, "they've been putting in this whole winter in Lorraine in manœuvres for open war-

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fare. Pershing believes in open warfare. He's insisting on it..." A man with a sallow face, side whiskers, at the next table turned his head just the faintest bit, and held it, motionless. His hand, that had been raising bits of bread up to his mouth, sunk back and rested on the white cloth, the bread still in it. Anne watched him. His back was toward them... He never turned his head round...

"Pershing's going to show 'em, they've got to get out of the trenches, –" the Colonel was eating soup now. "Everyone thinks our General Staff is crazy,– even the officers in the division think that. But old Jack Pershing's going to prove that he's right..." The man at the table next wrote something on a card. He sent it by a waiter to a woman, who sat smoking a cigarette at a table across the room. The woman moved between the tables, and sat down opposite the man, facing the Americans, staring with almond-shaped eyes under blackened lids. Eyes that moved while the woman's head and neck stood still... She talked to the man, rapidly, in French. 'The large one... with the red face...' Her paint-ringed eyes were on the Colonel next Anne...

"Don't let's talk about the war, Colonel," Anne said. "Tell me, have you seen the Folies Bergère yet?" The Colonel's red face softened. He sure had... The woman at the next table began to eat her 'petits pois.' The man leaned back in his chair, not so intent now. Anne ate her Lobster Newburg. 'Why, I haven't seen a show yet I'd take my wife to,' the Colonel saying... Darn the spies,– you might have gotten so much information from this old boy... He never would have noticed anyone listening.

Done, at last. Anne strolled back between Lind and the Colonel from G.H.Q. toward the office. Glad to go back. The office was the safest place for this bird... Colonel Henderquist and Lettice walking ahead, there... Lettice blushing, laughing... The Colonel, still telling her funny stories. Nice of the Colonel... 'Keep everybody happy,' was his motto... And he did it... 'You know, Miss Wentworth, somehow you remind me of my wife,' the old boy next her, saying... The flag, swinging, lazy,– 'Call out the guard! The Commanding Officer!' yelled the sentry. He stood, stiff-faced. If those girls was alone, he'd talk to 'em... The officers saluted, walked past.

"Never mind the guard!" the soldier roared, swinging his gun down. Third time the old man had taken that jane to luncheon... He winked at the Corporal in the doorway. "Say, it's a great war!" he said...

...

The concierge had a letter for Anne ce soir. The good man had been saving it for several days now. For had not this Américaine been here two weeks, and never, so far, given him a tip? His wife had objected to this method. It was a soldier's letter, she pointed out. The soldier might be killed... She would herself point out to the American lady that it was customary, every week, to give the poor concierge a slight pourboire... The letter was from Geoffrey. 'Haven't had my clothes

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off for three weeks,' he said, 'and can't see any prospect of ever getting them off again. They got us up in pitch darkness at three o'clock the other morning, and marched us fifteen miles to be reviewed by big-wigs. We stood waiting in the mud an hour. Then, after two more hours, when the review was over, we started marching back. You'd get damned dejected if there weren't always someone, who makes a joke just at the worst moment,–' "De l'eau chaude!" Old Jeanne, Mademoiselle Eveline's maid, thumped a tin can down by the wash stand. Anne watched her in the mirror over the mantelpiece where she was doing her hair. Where was Clémentine, she asked? This was not Jeanne's job. In France, maids never had 'days out.' Ah, yes, Clémentine's husband was coming from the front this week,– she had three days of 'sortie.'

"Son mari," Jeanne turned, rested the backs of her two hands on her broad hips. She talked in jerks. These Américaines often did not understand things... "Il est disparu.[1] The Government has sent today the news." Anne's comb stopped in mid-air. She turned round. The old woman was waddling toward the door. The strange, starched strings of her white cap jerked as she walked. At the door, she turned. "C'est la guerre, Mademoiselle," her deep voice quickly, "c'est la guerre!"

...

Dinner was gay that evening. Two young American men had come to live. Madame seated them between the 'jeunes filles' of the pension. There were three of these, slim, oval-faced girls of seventeen and eighteen, their hair frizzled in bangs across their foreheads. They prattled continuously to one another, while their mamas discussed what was best for them, sotto voce, in corners, as though it were some sinister joke to keep the wickedness of life from them until, one day, they should be turned over to their world-wise husbands. Tonight, watching the young men from the corners of their eyes, they prattled more continuously than ever.

One of the Americans was a Red Cross man, dressed as a lieutenant, the other a lieutenant of artillery... The lieutenant sat opposite to Anne, bewildered between the prattle of Christiane on one side and Germaine on the other. His name, in French, they were telling him, would be 'Poulain, M. le Lieutenant Poulain.' They laughed, merrily. Lieutenant Colt, meeting Anne's eyes, laughed too. Anne laughed,– She stopped. Above the young man's head, suddenly, Clémentine's pale face, bending over, passing the salade. Clémentine's pretty, pouting lower lip, caught between her teeth, a hard, white line. Clémentine's great, dark eyes half closed. As though some physical pain had taken her, and screwed her... 'You are still in school, Mademoiselle, you and your sister, and your cousin?' the young lieutenant opposite was asking Germaine. Germaine was the prettiest of these

[1] 'He is lost.'

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three... 'But no, Monsieur. Thanks to God, we had already finished when it was necessary for us to quit our château.' Clémentine's pale face, there above them...

'And what do you do now?' the young man, asking... 'One sews, one takes music lessons,' Germaine, laughed. What a fine, brave young officer... If only,– 'We make exercises on the piano,' said Christiane, 'and we go to see each day our grand'mère in the Boulevard Saint-Germain. Grand'mère is very old...' If one could interest him, perhaps,– 'But you have no work,' said the American, 'you do not nurse, make bandages?' 'Ah, non, Monsieur!' Germaine's pink, oval face was solemn. 'In France, no! Maman herself makes bandages at the Croix-Rouge, but for us, she would not permit it. Never in life!' Germaine blushed. One could not tell this young man that work would end one's chances of being married...

The young American looked up at Anne. Nice girl, that,– a twinkle of humor in the grey eyes... Have to talk to this girl after dinner... She was looking up at,– at the maid, passing the dessert. God, what a white face... Something must have gone wrong with that maid... And the American girl's grey eyes were following her, and feeling badly... 'Vous trouvez?' prattled Christiane, in his left ear.

"Ah, oui!" said Lieutenant Colt, "je trouve!"

...

"Do they go on like that at every meal?" Colt stood before Anne, stirring his coffee, in the salon. He liked this girl's eyes... After so many French eyes, they were,– He would get used to the jeunes filles 'going on' she told him... A sense of humor...

"What do you do?" she asked.

"I'm in the Intelligence Division," he laughed. Joan Porter joined them, and Bird, of the Red Cross. "Well,– well, we collect information," he said. If only she'd sit down, talk to you... "I've just got back from Tours. The Major told me to go down there and get some information. I had the information he wanted in my desk at the time. I said so. 'Lieutenant,' yells he, 'orders are orders!' 'Yes, Sir,' says I. So I put the information in my musette bag, went down to Tours, had a look at a château or two, and came back. I handed him the same report I'd had in my desk. 'Very good work, Lieutenant,' says the old boy,–" Shouts of laughter from Anne and Joan and Mr. Bird. Christiane and Germaine, standing by the window, watched them, sadly. What was it that these young men saw in these girls? Not at all pretty, Mees Ventvort and Mees Portaire...

"It's a great war!" Miss Wentworth was saying...

...

The middle of the night. The syren, cutting into sleep... Boring, like a gimlet, into a tired brain... Shrieking, wailing, disappearing into distance... Joan rolled over in bed. "I suppose we've got to get up."

"Damn," said Anne. From somewhere, off in the distance, came

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the vague ker-bung, ker-bung of anti-aircraft. The girls rolled out of bed. "Let's just put our coats on," said Joan.

"And face the Marquise?" They dressed. They joined the pensionnaires on the stairs. The 'ascenseur' was already 'descending' with Mademoiselle Eveline. The two new American lieutenants came casually, in slippers, bare ankles, pajama legs showing below their trench coats. Their hair was tousled. Behind them came the Commandant Béras, of the Ministère de la Guerre, in full regalia, his leather puttees shining. At the door of the cellar stood the French captain, bowing. 'Passez, Madame, passez! Après vous, Mademoiselle... Mon Commandant. Madame la Générale...' He saluted Madame la Générale...

One candle stood on a box in the dark place. Its dim light wavered on faces, in a circle. Mademoiselle Eveline's dark eyes flashed as she talked to the Marquise... 'Les Boches...' The Marquise, sitting gracious, upright on a stool her white hair done in its usual high pompadour, her bang neatly frizzed above her high forehead, pearl earrings dangling, dignified, from her creased ears... Beside her, her daughter, the Comtesse, on a box, holding her little girl... Madame la Générale, wrinkled, bent, her old eyes watery, held her head up proudly... She was not ancien nobilité. Mais enfin, she could chat in the face of danger as well as they could... Had not her husband been a General under the third Napoleon? Was not her son on the staff at the Ministère de la Guerre?

"Asseyez-vous là, Mesdemoiselles." Madame de Mourgues stood in the doorway, receiving, pointing to places. "Madame, I have a place for you here, near the candle..." She looked at Mr. Bird, and Mr. Colt. Not dressed? Had she made a mistake, then? There was Christiane, shoving over and giving Mr. Bird a place beside her... He, then, was not embarrassed... 'Piétiner l'anthracite, Monsieur,' came Christiane's clear, high voice, 'cela veut dire, ah, what the Americans do, to kick the coal around, when there is not too much coal. You understand?' Colt looked down at Anne. "I guess we should have dressed," he said. She would tell the truth, this girl...

"I guess you should have."

...

"Like a bad dream," said Colt, "going to a dinner party in your pajamas. Can't we get out?" They had sat there an hour. Among the 'haute société' the conversation still was animated, their straight backs straight as ever, hands crossed in their laps...

"Let's go out on the bridge," said Anne. "You can see finely." The four Americans edged their way toward the stairway. 'Bonsoir, Madame.' 'Bonsoir, Mademoiselle...' The proud pompadours inclining as they squeezed past... The Marquise and the Comtesse eyeing the white edges of pajamas... Talking... Beyond them in the coal cellar the servants, sobbing... The servants, frightened... The 'haute

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société,' it seemed, were never frightened... They, whose ancestors had faced a guillotine, should they weep now? 'Barbarians, Madame,' Anne heard the Commandant saying to the Marquise, 'sauvages! But they will perhaps save France if they come quickly...'

...

Anne walked beside Colt in the dark street. "Sometimes I think they hate us," she said.

"They think we're childish," said Colt, "and you can't blame 'em. We are." He laughed. "Why, when the Intelligence Department opened up, the French gave my Chief a whole lot of information, papers,– everything. The old boy left 'em in a disorderly house the first night. Next day the owner of the disorderly house sent 'em back to the French Ministry. We've spent all our time since, trying to find out what was in those papers." They walked in silence. Behind them, Bird was telling Joan that she reminded him of his wife... On the sidewalk, round them, shrapnel pattered...

"Gosh! It's a great war!" Anne said...

...

Young Barnaby and seven of the others were sitting, waiting... They had come every day at first, then every other. Gradually some had dropped out. It was ten days now. "Oh yes," Anne came in from a meeting, "I have something for you." She hunted among papers on her desk, pulled out three orders, stamped with round stamps. "Lieutenant Sprague?" she said. Sprague wasn't there. "Lieutenant Caldwell?" Caldwell, it seemed, was missing. "Lieutenant Hopkins?" Hopkins stepped up nonchalant in new whipcord trousers, flaring coat tails... "Where are the others? I've got orders for you. Let me see, we better put initials on them..." Anne bent over, made squirls with her pen through the round stamps. "The French like plenty of initials," she said...

"The others?" said Hopkins. "I er-er– p'raps I can find 'em." He took his Order.

"Suppose you do," said Anne. Barnaby strolled toward the door.

"Well, boy," he said, "another day in Paris..." Anne looked up at him.

"Nothing for you yet," she said. "I'm sorry." Barnaby's eyes shifted, did not meet hers. His eagerness had vanished.

"Oh shucks," he said. "I'm havin' a good time."

...

"Let's dine at Henri's." Bird gave the order to the driver of the taxi. He wedged in, next to Colt, opposite to Anne and Joan.

"I think it's terrible," said Joan, "the way you Red Cross people throw your money round. Why, a lot of the Red Cross people live at the Crillon. The dollar that they collected from Mother's cook to join the Red Cross wouldn't pay the tip for one meal at the Crillon! They

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tour all over in automobiles, while no one in France is allowed the gasoline to run one,–"

"Efficient people," laughed Bird, "are apt to be expensive."

"Yes, and the Crillon," said Colt, "has the best bar in Paris." He caught Miss Wentworth's eye. She knew this war was,–

"It's a great war," she said...

...

They got back late. Anne and Joan made a fire, and sat reading letters from America that had come that day.

"'I do hope you're getting enough to eat,'" Anne read out loud a letter from her mother.

"Hors d'œuvre," said Joan. "Potage aux huîtres,–"

"Ecrevisses," said Anne, "Pigeonneau à la crème,–" "Salade,–" "Château Yquem..." The two girls laughed. And laughed again... Helpless with laughter... Somewhere outside they heard the syren shrieking. "There they are again," said Joan.

"Oh, shucks, we can't sit up every night." Anne put the light out. In the dark, they undressed...

...

The Boulevard des Italiens was dark and it was filled with people. Anne groped her way out from the Métro Station. Ruth Benson, a girl from Downham, was at the Pétrograd, Bird said. Must see her... Darkness, like soft, black velvet... A darkness filled with voices... Filled with People, moving... You felt them, as they brushed past... Began to see them, shadows... Above them, windows, shuttered... Behind the shutters, people hidden, somewhere... Lighter,– one's eyes grew used to darkness... A circle of blue light beyond there, at the corner of some street... Blue lights, under deep iron shades, shedding little pools of blue-green visibility, growing smaller as they led off ... Blackness between them... Here, a real light, bright yellow, four square windows on the sidewalk... A urinoir... Paris dark, except for these, on every corner... Anne walked through a dim yellow radiance, and a vile smell...

The Boulevard des Capucines. People jostled against Anne. The sidewalk, filled with the crowds, moving, mysterious, in the eerie darkness. Two boys in the uniform of the American Ambulance walked ahead of Anne. She saw their broad shoulders entering the pool of blue light... Girls darted in at them out of the blackness... Moths, that flutter... 'Promenade ce soir?' 'Venez avec moi?' The boys shook their heads, strode on. 'Go to Hail!' one of the girls called. They backed away, tittering, into the dark. Their eyes, large, searching, hungry, looking at you from the darkness as you walked through the blue light... 'Américaine,' they whispered...

Two officers, splendid in the black and red of French artillery, came toward Anne, chattering, and passed by. Anne turned and watched them. They walked into the pool of blue light, through it, and swung

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on, unnoticing, unnoticed. Two Y.M.C.A. men coming this way... Girls darting at them from the darkness... One girl, clinging... Anne turned, went on. 'Gosh...' Two big Australians, standing by the curbstone, each talking to girls whose heads reached to their elbows. 'Jolie,' they were saying. 'Jolie, vous...'

Very dark... People, pressing close... Talking... Moving together in the darkness... Girls whispering... What a long way it was between the blue lights... The Ambulance boys, ahead, coming to the next light... Its blueness falling on their heads, their shoulders, shining on their canes... Girls, dodging out of darkness, catching their arms. 'You get to Hell out of here!' One of the boys, pushed her with his forearm, 'Christ, let's get onto a side street,' said the other. They dove into the darkness... The rue Caumartin,– Anne read the letters by the light of the urinoir at the corner. A black street... In the narrow darkness, people, pushing, jostling, crowding toward the entrance of the Comédie Royale... In the vestibule, as Anne passed, dim silhouettes of men in uniform, with women's hats among them...

The Hôtel Pétrograd,– 'old stamping ground of all the spies from Russia' Colt had said... Low doorway, grilled with iron... A marble hallway and a crimson carpet. Light, falling on the grey hair of a pleasant, stoutish woman in a grey uniform behind the high desk... American... Respectability, home,– everything you had forgotten, concentrated in this pleasant, quiet woman. 'American Y.W.C.A.' across the blue triangle on the woman's coat sleeve. "Yes, Miss Benson's in her room," she said. "You can go up." Anne walked up the winding stairs, through the hall. The smell of Russians, still, about these carpets... She knocked at a white door.

"Anne Wentworth! How did you get here?" Alone, at night in Paris? Ruth Benson set down the box of figs and Petit Suisse that she was eating. "I'm so glad you came," she said. "I saw your mother..." Anne sat down on the bed and pulled her hat off. It made you a little giddy to think of anything so far away as home was...

"Yes," she said, "tell me..."

...

Near midnight. Time to go, now... Like tearing yourself away from Home all over,– You had stepped back, for three hours into the old life... Mother, and Josiah,– God, would you never,– The rue Caumartin, pale yellow moonlight touching the top row of windows of the houses, leaving the street a cavern... Somewhere, along the Boulevard the syren screeching... 'Air Raid...' The Comédie Royale pouring its audience into the narrow dimness. People, jostling, pushing, struggling forward. Anne, wedged behind an American colonel, overseas cap crooked jauntily on his head. A woman grabbed him. 'Pour la France, venez avec moi! J'ai peur!' she said. 'Go way, Sally!' The Colonel yanked his arm free. He watched the woman. And as she edged away among the crowd, he moved toward her...

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Anne watched a tall young Frenchman, his head and shoulders well above the crowd, looking down, talking... Trying to protect the woman next him with his arm... He turned his head back, to look at someone who pushed. Randolph... Very close... She could have touched him if she had stretched her arm out. The woman with him wore a close toque of gold tissue. Anne moved on, silent, near them. Horrid, not to say 'Hello' to Randolph... And yet... The corner of the Boulevard at last. The crowd dispersing, running toward the blue letters: 'Abri' above the Métro Station. Looking for carriages, talking... Anne stopped at the corner. Randolph and his lady stepped out into the dim street... Anne watched them walk toward a private limousine that stood there... Randolph opened its door. The lady stepped in. Randolph got in beside her, slamming the door. The gears crunched and the unlit car moved off... Anne walked slowly toward the entrance to the Métro. Who could it be who had a limousine, in war-time?

...

She yawned. She had sat on the subway steps an hour. Darn these Germans... They kept you awake every night now... They had to stay awake, too, up there in darkness... Probably disliked it... Over, at last. An official, shooing people... The Métro? But it had arrested for the night, Madame... No more Métro... Anne turned, went up the steps. Well, have to walk, then...

She walked through silent, moonlit streets like a grey shadow... Randolph... A beautiful woman. Same one... She could see straw-colored hair, under that close hat... The obelisk in the Place de la Concorde cast a black shadow on the pavement... Anne walked past it. Here once a guillotine used to cut people's heads off... Heads, of beautiful women, falling in baskets... A horse cab trotted past her... The steady plop, plop of the hoofs receding... The great square, empty... Its statues, hiding under sand bags... Paris,– a woman, silent, suffering, her eyes shut... Anne crossed the bridge. Moonlight played on the ripples of the river... Silver water, moving... She stopped to look. A sound, coming through stillness, from the distance... Artillery, booming, steady... One, two... One, two... The front... War...

...

Anne stopped at the kiosk by the bridge next morning to buy her paper. The silver mystery that lurked last night had vanished. The pavements with their morning wetness, shining... Sun sparkling on the ripples of the river... 'Bonjour, Ma*dame*!' The black-clad woman in the kiosk handed Anne the 'Paris Herald.' 'AMERICAN BRINGS DOWN TWO HUNS... Pendleton now an ace...' Heavens... Anne stood still, reading... 'Early in the morning of yesterday,' the dispatch said, 'the American pilot Randolph Pendleton of Escadrille No. 77 of the French Army was patrolling over the German lines when,–' Anne read on. He had, it seemed, been attacked by three Fokkers,

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and somehow, almost miraculously, downed two. The other he chased until an injury to his own plane caused him to turn back... Anne folded her paper, walked on, slowly. So he had been flying over the front yesterday morning... Taking a lady to the theatre in Paris yesterday evening... Randolph, an ace... Gosh...

...

"Anne, will you lunch with me?" A voice, very faint over the French telephone... "Ne coupez pas, Mademoiselle, je vous en prie," it went on. "Ne coupez pas!" Who was it? A man's voice... Sounded French... "It's Randolph," the voice came faintly through the clickings on the wire. "Can't take you to dinner... Have to go back up front this afternoon. Be round about twelve..."

"J'écoute!" said the French operator. The line went dead...

...

He strode in, tall, slim, the ribbon of the Croix-de-Guerre pinned to his black blouse. Miss Featherstone came with him. Tall, God-like creature, this,– who could he be? Her bright eyes asking... Miss Wentworth's cousin? Oh! She shook hands with the tall French aviator... *She'd* never let any cousinship come between *her* and a man like that... Miss Wentworth though, was a queer, cool creature... She turned to go. The Adjutant looked at her. His best look,– But she didn't see him...

...

"Good Lord, what do all these people do here?" asked Randolph down across Anne's shoulder. American guard, saluting his clothes... Didn't know he was only a sergeant...

"Oh, eat and fall in love... Work at times. Wonder what's happening in the Great War," said Anne. Pleasant to walk with a man that people turned to look at...

"Who's this old boy ahead with the pretty girl?"

"That," said Anne, "is Colonel Henderquist."

"It is? By Jove, I believe Mother,–" Randolph's brow wrinkled. Trying to remember something very far back. A captain, in a parlor... Little boy in a white suit... He swung you to his shoulder... Talked about horses... And Mother laughed and came close,– They'd gone back to the hills,– His father, lying all white and limp, along the jiggly boards of old Jep Harrow's mule team... Lulu Belle, yanking your hand, dragging you upstairs... 'Lightfoot done miss her step, Honey. Fell ober de cliff up to Harmon's Falls,–' 'But Father told me Lightfoot never missed her,–' Lulu Belle's hand jerking...

"Yes," said Randolph, "Mother used to know him."

"The lady," said Anne, "is his stenographer. Her fiancé is at the British front. The Colonel's taking her out to lunch to cheer her,–"

"The deuce he is!" They got into a taxi. "Foyot's..."

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Randolph consulted earnestly with the head waiter. His French was perfect... He gestured, like a Frenchman. Anne watched him. A Greek athlete... A grace about him, a perfect control of muscle, a rhythm in each movement... He sat back on the leather-covered bench, pulled out a cigarette case.

"How does it feel to be a hero?" Anne asked. Randolph smiled. Same old Anne... Same quaint integrity, same clear gaze... Anne would not change... Whereas he,– And yet, his character had not changed. People's characters didn't go different, it was just that circumstances changed, and then the stanch ones stayed firm and the shifty ones went shifty... Here was Anne, looking at him, asking how it felt to be a hero.

"Feels damned ticklish while you're in the air," said Randolph. "I could hear those old Boche's bullets a-whistlin' and singin' round my gas tank yesterday. It's just fifty-fifty whether you hit him or he hits you. Just like you toss up a coin, Anne, and it comes down heads, or it comes down tails. It may come down heads eight or nine times, and then you get to be a hero. You keep on tossin' it long enough, and some day it'll go against you." He took a sip of wine. He set his glass down. Shouldn't have said it,– You lost something every time you said it... Weren't goin' to get killed,– damn it! Goin' to bluff it out to the last. Goin' to fly as if you had a charmed life... You *had* a charmed life,– yet,–

Anne watched him. Marvellous good-looking, Randolph... His bronzed face. His white teeth, when he smiled, showing under that strange moustache. He looked years older,–

"I'm no hero, you know, Anne. You don't want to forget that for one second." His dark eyes met hers. Anne looked straight at him. Whatever he had done, he wasn't ashamed... Men's eyes, sometimes, shifted... His stayed... "If you know that the coin's comin' down tails some day," he said, "you,– you try to suck the orange dry before they knock it out of your hand. You've got to, to keep your mind off,– There's two things you can't think about: one's the fighting that you did today. The other's the fighting that you're goin' to do tomorrow. If you do, you get jumpy. You have to just live in the minute you're in, try to plunge into life up to the hilt in every minute. Get every smell and sound and taste and feel that's in it... The beauty of it, and the extraordinary sweetness. Life's a sort of splendid stream of good things flowing past you, and you're a fly that can buzz round and taste 'em. Till Someone swats you. You know that Life's goin' on,– all the good things,– after you've been swatted... That's the irritating part of it. That's why you feel so extraordinarily keen to be alive now." He took a sip of wine.

"I know. It felt like that in the submarine zone," Anne said.

"You fly up on the morning patrol," said Randolph, "and you push into mists and dark clouds. Then all of a sudden you come out into

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sunlight, billowy white below, and blue above you. Heading for the sky, the wind in your teeth... That's Life. Then you look down, through the clouds to a great sea, of green and blue and purple,– and that's the Earth, spread out. Some day I'm goin' to paint the world the way it looks from up there." The chicken came, and he talked to the waiter. The waiter, congratulating him, shaking his hand... 'La chance,' Randolph was saying... 'La chance...' [1]

"Then you see," he said, "you come down. And there's the old earth, and it's rainin'. And you're keyed up. You,– you've got to feel,– other things,– too, that are in Life, before they vanish. See what I mean?" He looked at her. Clear, grey eyes... Could she? She nodded, tasting of the chicken.

"Yes, I see," she said.

...

"Rosalind," said Anne, "is coming over." She'd have to say it, sometime... They walked out into the Gardens of the Luxembourg.

"I know." He walked, looking at the ground. "I wish she wouldn't..." They walked, in silence. "I'd like to keep her,– well,– separate from all this. Like to find somebody, if I go back, who still thinks everything we did over here is fine and noble. If she comes over,– you know what it's like, Anne. Illusions don't last."

"Who wants illusions?" said Anne.

"Some illusions make people very happy: a fatherly God, and a pleasant Heaven, the notion people have at home that War is Noble. Ideas like that keep folks from havin' to face the Music."

"I'd rather face the Music." Anne traced a figure with the point of her umbrella in the wet sand. "As far as Heaven goes, you only have to stand on the brink of being knocked off, to feel that it would be the End. It's *this* world that counts. And as for nobility, what you see over here is that the same thing that makes a man physically brave makes him,– well,– what we used to call at home immoral."

"That's right," said Randolph, "the same fellers who act like heroes, act like rotters." He looked at her. Her eyes, straightforward, fearless... Should he tell her...

She watched him. His brown eyes wavering an instant,– would he? He pointed at the Bacchante of MacMonnies that danced among the bushes. "That's the statue that your estimable town would not take," he said. "She's waiting for some richer town to come and buy her, after we've made the World Safe for Prosperity, and these countries over here are all broke. She's dancing on the edge of the Great Precipice, that lady!" Rain water dripped from the bunch of grapes in the bronze woman's hand down, past her child's mouth. Her plump sides glistened. "Your town was shocked. They didn't like to admit there was such a spirit in this world. Puritans could never

[1] 'Luck, luck.'

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understand that. They might see the Precipice, but they'd never understand the dancing."

"I wonder." Anne looked at her wrist. "Heavens, I ought to go back to the office."

"By Jove, I ought to go back to the front!" said Randolph.

...

The taxi stopped in the Avenue Montaigne. They shook hands while it stood chugging, by the sidewalk. 'A good lunch. Thanks!' Anne smiling, as if it all were nothing,– that that coin might come down tails... You mustn't think of,–

"See you again!" said Randolph. Would he... Would he... He bent his head to get into the taxi. "Le Bourget, Aérodrome..."

...

Anne wrote to Rosalind in the dull hour that always followed luncheon. Randolph looked wonderful as a French pilot... People turned and looked at him in a restaurant when he came in... She was glad Randolph had decided to transfer to the American Air Service. The American Air Service, she added, was moving, swiftly... Anne laid down her pen. What took the Colonel so long about his lunch? Where had Randolph been before he lunched with her? Things you thought... Things you didn't write down... 'Call out the guard! The Commanding Officer!' a voice boomed from the courtyard. 'Never mind the guard!' Lettice was hanging her hat up in the corner...

...

"Monks is going to Chaumont." Joan was sitting on the floor before the fire, hands folded, gazing...

"Well?" Anne looked round from washing stockings in the basin. A new intonation, somehow, in Joan's voice... Joan, sitting there, smiling absurdly... Joan, telling you she was engaged to 'Monkey'... That it was wonderful to be,–

"You idiot," Anne dropped the stockings into the bowl.

"Why, Anne!" Joan, hurt...

"You don't know what he's like in civilian life. You don't know his,–" Anne paused. No use, Joan was in love... Love was like War, you couldn't reason with it... That man, with his dark, queer face... His eyes, that shifted... His cleverness, his knowledge of the world... And Joan's lack of it... Good God... Anne turned back to the stockings.

Joan sat and smiled. It had been last night, and he had kissed her... Wandering along the quai by moonlight, leaning on the parapet, next him, a tremor, a storm, a sudden opening of something... His lips, on hers... His arms, behind her shoulders... Loosening her... Looking at her... And she had liked it. Liked it... Wanted more,– In all her life before, no man had kissed her. And they had wandered, his arm close about her, his body, touching... 'So, we're engaged,' she had said. He had looked at her, queerly... 'Are we?' he'd said... 'Well, aren't we?'

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'Why, I suppose so...' And then, again... Ah,– Anne wouldn't understand... Any more than she, Joan, would have understood, before that... "It's wonderful," said Joan, sitting and smiling.

Anne screwed the water from the stockings. The sneering look the man had... No, somehow, this was all wrong... She moved the towel rack of tattered, dripping stockings near the fire. Joan's face,– almost beautiful... Transported... Illusions, that made you happy... "I hope that Rosalind's stockings will fit us," Anne said...

...

Madame Vidon lived at the top of a small house in Passy. Anne and Joan followed Brock up three flights of oak stairs, spotless, polished... 'His old lady,' he had told them in the office, 'was awful anxious for him to bring 'em out some evening to drink tea with her...' Up, up... "Her husband, he got killed in 1914," Brock was explaining, "and her son, he got killed last year up to Verdun." Above them, a door opened. A small, thin woman in black stood in the doorway, light falling on her white hair:

"A-ah! Vous voilà! I am enchanted to see you, Mesdemoiselles!" The hands that met theirs were thin and bony, rough places on the fingers worn by needles pricking... "How you are good, to have come so far to take a cup of tea, with la Tante Vidon! Entrez! Entrez! It seems to me we are already old friends. Mon fils," she patted Brock's uniform, "mon fils has talked to me so much of you."

They sat down at a table, spread with a white cloth. It was a tiny place lit by one lamp. All the light seemed to go to the old lady's white hair... "Yes, I call him my son. Do you know why?" The little old lady scuttling round among the tea things... "He has not told you? Toute une histoire! I was making a little tour in the garden of the Trocadéro. It was there that all at once I saw a soldier stretched out, asleep. I stopped myself. He resembled so much my own son, I said to myself: it is my boy, whom the good God has returned to me! I seated myself on a bench to await till he should wake,–"

"N' I woke up," said Brock, "an' there she was, a sittin', lookin' at me,–"

"What is it that he says?" Madame came, bearing the steaming tea pot. "Du thé, Mademoiselle? Voilà. Du sucre,– du bon sucre de l'armée Américaine,– Un gâteau? Alors, I have demanded of him if he would like to return to the house with me, and occupy the empty room of my son. He has come. My 'American son' I call him. And we are happy, n'est-ce-pas, mon fils? We work, both of us, in the daytime. I sew, Mesdemoiselles, for one of the grands couturiers of the boulevard. At seven o'clock we come home, I prepare for him une bouchée à manger, and in the evening, one makes up a hand of cards, a game of dominoes. Et puis, je lui apprends à parler français."

"He is lucky," said Anne.

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"I'll tell the world I am!" said Brock. He patted the narrow shoulder, smiling his wry smile.

"Ah, Mesdemoiselles," said Madame Vidon, "it is I who have had luck! I am mother to him, and I will be aunt to all of you, if you will let me!" The little seamstress drew their cups toward her, and poured more tea...

...

The horse-chestnut buds along the Avenue Montaigne were bursting sticky brown sheaves. Anne looked up at them, soft folded hands, covered with browny cotton. Joan, engaged to Monks... Appalling... Never would have seen Monks if it hadn't been for War. Never would have noticed him if she had... A small, green leaf, the five fingers of a hand, unfolding, spreading away from the brown cotton on its back... Another, turning its small, green fingers downward... A tiny flower bud, a miniature of the great thing that it would be... A process, going on slowly, surely... In spite of War, in spite of everything,– that process that kept things living... Joan, falling in love... A process, that would go on...

...

Waiting... All the Chiefs of the Departments, sitting in a circle, waiting... Anne sat at a small table in the end of the big salon. Before her on the table lay her note book, pencils... The room was large, French, white-panelled, mirrored. The Chiefs of the Departments sat in red plush armchairs, their polished puttees crossed above the crimson carpet. They came like this each day, and waited. Anne watched them. They were a little bit annoyed by waiting. Had hurried to get here on time, and now,– Professor Dangerfield, sitting chin up, eyes gazing at the ceiling... Major Salmon and the Captain next him yawning, shifting. Hadn't they walked from their hotel, and got here? Didn't the Colonel ride everywhere in a great car? Irritation in the air... You felt it... The door opened. Everyone rose. 'Keep your seats, gentlemen, keep your seats!' The Colonel, smiling. The Majors and the Captains took their seats after he had sat down. They smiled. By God, a military superior, who could treat you as an equal! Fine man!

A sharp explosion. Everyone started, listened. Anne stopped writing. An air raid? In the daytime? Startled faces, turning slowly from one to the,– 'As I was saying, gentlemen,' the Colonel's voice... The Colonel's smile... The meeting went on. Another explosion. It came from somewhere toward the river. The Majors and the Captains shifted in the plush chairs. The Colonel never looked up. People strolled out onto the balcony after the meeting. The sky was clear and blue. Against the blue little clouds, tiny white ostrich feathers, uncurling, floating...

"That's shrapnel," said the Colonel. "If there were a plane up there, you'd see it,–" He paused. Again the short, sharp re-

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port from somewhere toward the river. "Don't understand it," he said.

...

The French stenographers sat in the cellar, all the morning. One had lived through the war so far, they explained, by extreme carefulness in the matter of alertes. One was not now going to get killed for the Americans... Anne, Joan, Lettice, even Miss Featherstone, worked steadily, heatedly, without pause.

"They say down at the Ministère de la Guerre,"– Monks stopped for a second in the Adjutant's doorway,– "they say that there's a long-range gun firing on Paris." Everyone laughed. Impossible, from such a distance...

"Say, it's a great war!" said the soldier in the corner.

...

Evening... Anne and Joan went home late, weary... Well, at least dinner would be cheerful... It wasn't. The gayety, the vivacity among the French people at Madame de Mourgues' had vanished. Halfway down the table the Commandant, from the French War Ministry, sat, elbow on the table, his forehead resting heavily on his palm. Next him, Madame la Générale, his mother, diminutive, shrivelled, shaking her head. Why did not Madame la Générale quit Paris, Madame de Mourgues, suggesting,– and take a quiet lodging in the country? Leave Paris? Madame la Générale's old head nodded, a spark of anger in the watery, blue eyes. Had she not stayed in Paris during the great siege of 1870? Was she a coward, that she should now quit Paris? Next Anne, the little Comtesse d'Estrée sat silent. Only last evening, the little Comtesse had been all smiles... Her husband, the Count, in the shabby blue uniform of a Corporal of Infantry, had appeared yesterday, quite suddenly, on his leave. The little Comtesse had sat, purring, next him...

"Votre mari, Madame?" Anne inquired, hesitating.

"Ah, Mademoiselle,"– a shake of the pale, oval face under its frizzed bang, "il est parti. He has been recalled to his regiment. A great offensive has been launched by the Boches in Picardy, one says." The little Comtesse laid her fork down. She, too, like the old Générale, could endure... But it was as a corporal that one got killed first... The gouvernement did not wish to give commissions to the ancien nobilité de la France,– and yet, the gouvernement was proud to have them, too, die... The jeune Américaine was saying she was sorry... They did not know what war was, these Americans... They had not seen, yet...

Mademoiselle Duphot, Madame de Mourgues' cousin, came in, when dinner was half done, very red-faced, panting... She was dressed in the blue cape, the long blue veil of the French Red Cross. It floated behind her as she went round the table toward her place... "I have done my valise," Mademoiselle, talking, breathless. "One says that

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there is great agitation all along the front. On demande des infirmières à cor et à cri..." Mademoiselle ate her soup, in great gulps... "A huit heures je pars." Anne and Joan went to their room, stood smoking in the open window.

"Good Heavens, what's the matter with everyone?" said Joan. "It was like a cloud before a thunderstorm."

"I guess this is the beginning of the war," said Anne.

...

An explosion. Anne lay in bed, eyes closed, listening. An air raid... She opened her eyes. No, it was daylight... It was six o'clock. Must be that mysterious gun, shooting... She'd close her eyes, go to sleep for another hour... Another explosion. Louder today than yesterday... Quarter past six... One could tell what time it was by counting the explosions...

"Damn them!" Joan yawned.

...

"Bonjour, Mademoiselle!" The bass voice of the woman in the black dress in the kiosk. She did not smile when Anne bought her paper. 'The communiqué, very serious, very bad... O, la! la!' Anne scanned the six lines, printed in italics. British falling back beyond Saint-Quentin... French entering the battle on the British right... Paris shelled, from a distance of seventy-five miles...

Spring seemed to float down the Seine toward the bridge of Alma, a tenuous, sweet mist... Anne turned her face toward the sun. The budding trees hung a thin veil between her and the river. Life, sweet... But,– faces passing... Every morning one met these same faces... Today one felt a shadow thrown across them... Sombre faces...

The green fingers of the horse-chestnuts were all turned down now, – delicate, green frills around the coming blossoms... Under them a long line of army trucks was standing. Anne saw the insignia of the Air Service dimly, through a film of white dust... American soldiers stood along the curbstone, talking. Dust on unshaven chins, their eyebrows white with powder...

"Where did you come from?" Anne stopped by a group of drivers.

"Toors," said a soldier. "Been runnin' all night. Come up to salvage these guys at headquarters here, I reckon. Say, boy,–" he turned to a corporal, "when do we eat?" Anne hurried into the building. Everything quite the same as always,– except that the Colonel was on time... Anne found her note book, collected pencils, hurried to the meeting...

...

Anne closed her book, her finger in the notes. The meeting over... No,– "Gentlemen,"– the Colonel leaned back in his stiff chair. "It is up to each of us to push this thing along with the utmost possible speed. It is now a question of getting our squadrons to the front

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before this war is over..." Silence. They waited for him to rise. Anne picked up her pencils, pushed her chair back, sat, watching the Colonel. Everyone, watching the Colonel... He, sitting, hands resting on the seat of his straight chair, head bent, looking at the carpet... "Just a minute, gentlemen!" The officers subsided into the plush armchairs. "The General wants us to be ready to leave Paris by noon today," the Colonel spoke quickly. "The situation is extremely serious. If we go, only those papers which are of the utmost importance can be taken. You will see that in your departments, all such papers are gotten together this morning. All other papers will be taken to the courtyard. There they will be burned, before we evacuate these headquarters. That's all, gentlemen!" The Colonel was up, smiling, standing easy, nonchalantly, talking to someone...

Anne felt her heart bump, felt her breath come quicker, felt that strange sensation of being ready to move and move fast... Run, that was it... A coward,— might as well admit it... The Chiefs of the Departments sat, looking at one another... Watching the Colonel who stood, smiling, chatting in the doorway, cool, easy, as though this were a luncheon party... The Colonel laughed, at something Lind said to him. His head thrown back,— a hearty, mirthful peal of laughter. Suddenly the Chiefs of the Departments rose, and gathered up their papers.

"Oh, Miss Wentworth," the Colonel touched Anne's elbow as she went out. "You and Miss Porter will have a seat on the first truck, if we do go. Just help Brock sort those papers..."

"Thank you," Anne said...

...

Lunch time... Papers all sorted, one boxful standing ready near the doorway. They looked at one another. Here they were, still... "Might as well go out and get your lunch," said Brock...

"Oh, yes," said Anne. "Lunch..."

...

A gendarme stopped her at the Champs-Elysées. She stood among a little crowd at the crossing. Automobiles, all up and down the street were standing, waiting. A fire perhaps... Waiting for the engines... Snorting, puffing, came a motor-cycle... Bouncing on the saddle, a French soldier in goggles, covered with white dust... Sixty miles an hour, the thing was going... Slowing down, tipping sideways, turning to the right around the Grand Palais. "French, dispatch rider..." said an officer near Anne. "Going to the Ministère de la Guerre... Saw one come in down there this morning... The wires are all down,—" Anne crossed the street. Lunch... Strange that you went on eating...

...

"Lieutenant Preston! Where did you come from?" Joan shook hands with a strange lieutenant who was sitting in the office when they got back.

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"Ran down from Amiens today," said the Lieutenant, "just got here. Colonel Wells is in talking to the Colonel,–"

"What's happening up there?" asked Anne.

"Hard to tell," he said. "We kept meeting droves of Tommies, wandering round under no command at all so far as we could see. Near Montdidier, a German motor-cycle scout rode past us, going so fast we couldn't see where he went. It gives you the feeling, altogether, of a bad dream,–"

Colonel Wells strode in with Lind. He and Joan shook hands. They talked a minute. Then they went out.

"My God, they're close," said Lind, as he sat down at his desk...

...

Something had happened. At the pension the French people were standing in the hallways, talking in excited whispers. Stopping as the American girls went past, watching them, silent. At dinner the places of Madame de Mourgues and Mademoiselle Eveline were empty. "Mademoiselle Eveline is ill?" Anne asked the Comtesse d'Estrée.

"Ah, Mademoiselle, it is their château in Longuet. They have just heard today that it is burned,– burned to the ground. The château was occupied by British officers. They were forced to evacuate it, and in the excitement of leaving, somebody tipped over a lamp. So it is quite gone, that old, and very beautiful château..."

"Oh, I am sorry..." Anne said.

"Their ancestors, you understand, the Saint-Hilaires, have lived on that spot for more than eight hundred years," the little Comtesse shook her head. "Madame de Mourgues and Mademoiselle Eveline had looked forward to going back there to pass the end of their days..."

"But someone will pay for it," said Anne. "The people who,–"

"Ah, je ne crois pas," the little Comtesse closed her pretty eyes, raising her eyebrows and her shoulders. "C'est la guerre!" she said...

...

Evening. The Gare du Nord was dingy, dimly lighted, filled with train smoke, people. French soldiers slept near the wall, their shabby blue uniforms stretched along the filthy pavement, heads resting on small, bulging, brown bags made of canvas. Their packs, heavy with dangling boots, bottles, canteens, shovels, slanted against the wall. Around, among them, over them, the crowds walked, stepping across them, as if they, too, were baggage. From beyond a barricade of sand bags came the puffing of engines and little, screaming whistles... Anne and Joan dodged between the people and the sleeping soldiers. They went to the canteen of the American Red Cross in the freight shed. 'We need everyone we can get,' Bird had said at dinner... A pleasant lady in blue gingham, with a starched white coif, came out to meet them. "Just go right out and meet the train, and kind of herd them

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into the waiting-room," she was saying... She gave them arm bands, aprons, white coifs.

A crowd stood before the door that led out through the barricade of sand bags. Old, old men, carrying bundles... Peasant women, seated on sacks, stout, stalwart, creatures, looking about them, bewildered, frightened... Children dodging among them, hatless, dirty. Children carrying babies... Babies crying... One of the women put her hand on Anne's arm, "Ah, Mademoiselle,"– her face was brown and wrinkled from much toil in the open. Tears in her dark eyes. "Mademoiselle can perhaps find my little girl. I took the train, you understand, with my other children. The English soldiers told us to take the train. It was the only thing to do, to take the first train. And when I found myself on the train, my child, my little Marthe, was not there. The train moved. One locked the door. I could not descend. The little one has without doubt stayed at Noyon. One said that the Germans were coming. Oh! Mademoiselle, je vous en supplie, trouvez-la! Ne m'abandonnez pas! Mon enfant! Ma petite Marthe!" Anne asked the name, bending over to listen to the hoarse voice, with its quaint accent. She patted the woman on the shoulder. Told her to wait there, that she would hunt, that she would bring the child back if she could find her... She pushed through to the little opening among the sand bags. A train puffed in. Lights from the railroad carriages sent blue rhomboids slanting down through smoke and steam along the narrow platform. Overhead, in the damp, smoke-laden air of the vast train shed, darkness...

Doors opened, people piled down, pulling bundles, lumpy string bags, children... Children cried, and women pulled them along, crying... They swarmed along the platform. From behind, the waiting peasants passed the guard and swarmed in, searching for their lost ones, talking, talking... A stout peasant woman in a black shawl stopped before Anne. "It is all very well," she shouted in hoarse French, "to be obliged to leave your home a first time. But when it is a question of going away a second time, Mademoiselle, that is too much! Here are two times that the Boches chase us from our homes!"

"I have lost everything," said a slim woman beside her, "my home, my child, my cow, my little pig. I have nothing, nothing!" She put her hand to her forehead, her head falling forward. "Prenez courage! Consolez-vous!" a stout woman thumped her on the shoulder, shouting at her. "The Americans are here. The Americans will protect you," she said. "They will protect all of us!"

Anne woke up, as it were. So she was to protect all of them... "You must go there," she said, "to the Salle d'Attente. There will be food there..." She spoke in French. She waved toward the station. Might just as well have spoken English... They looked at her, bewildered... More were coming... And more... Crowding down upon her... She

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must do something for them... "Mademoiselle est infirmière! Venez! Venez! Par ici!" A stout woman seized Anne's hand, dragged her through the moving, talking people, shouting something at her. She did not understand...

A pregnant woman staggered between an old man and another woman, her head tossing from side to side. "Oh, la! la! J'ai mal!" she kept saying, groaning... The stout peasant pointed at her. "Dépêchons nous!" she was shouting. "Vous voyez, Mademoiselle!" Mademoiselle saw. She turned round, started to make way for them. "Get out of the way! Get out of the way! Quick!" Anne walked ahead down the platform, pushing the people aside with her arms, talking to them in English. "Quick! Quick!" Better stick to English... They knew what you meant... Just keep going, like a snow plough... Forward, forward... Thank God, there was the sign, CROIX ROUGE AMÉRICAINE... Under it, a door... At the door stood Mr. Bird, shining, military, sorting out people, pointing this way, that way. "Here's a woman who's going to have a child right off. For God's sake, go and get somebody," Anne said. Bird scooted off toward the canteen.

The waiting room, thick with the smell of human beings... Anne steered the woman toward a cot in the corner. People packed closely... Foul air, shut in... An old woman lay on the bed, snoring, her head thrown back, her mouth wide open. A wisp of grey hair hung down over the cot's edge... Anne clutched her shoulder, shook it. The old woman sat up, staring, trembling... "Les Boches," she muttered. "Les Boches. Ah, quelle horreur! Jésus!"

"No, only a lady who's going to have a baby," Anne said. Queer where her French had gone to... Some facts of Life, though, you didn't need French to explain... She pointed to the groaning woman behind her. She smoothed the elder woman's dirty hair, patted her shoulder, smiled at her. Funny that one could smile... She pulled a double blanket from the bed, twitched out a hairpin, attached a corner of the blanket to a hook on the wall. She beckoned to a French soldier. "Votre bayonette. Votre fusil, ici." The soldier stood, smiling, while she hooked the blanket over the long, wicked, pointed thing. 'Oui, Mademoiselle,' he was to be the corner of the barricade, he understood... He stood there, smiling. Anne held the free end of the blanket against the wall, making a hollow square about the bed. The wall, the soldier, Anne... Inside, the woman... Why in Hell didn't Bird fetch somebody... The woman screamed...

Bird came, at last, bringing the dignified elderly lady from the canteen, and a pail of steaming water. Anne held the blanket aside to let the lady in. 'Get nitrate of silver,' she was saying to Bird across her shoulder, 'Nitrate of silver...' She disappeared behind the blanket, spoke to the two stout peasant women who were inside... Again, the woman, screaming... At the corner the little French soldier stood

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solidly, the blanket drooping from the long bayonet above his head. His eyes twinkled.

"Ordinarily I am engaged with death," he said pleasantly, "but tonight, I am engaged with birth. Tonight one is born,– tomorrow, one dies! Pfuit!" A strange, squawking noise behind the blanket... Some young animal,– "Tiens! C'est le petit gars!" The French soldier nodded, grinning. Anne smiled. Her knees, trembling.

"There's another train coming, Miss Wentworth, will you meet that? I'll hold the curtain." Mr. Bird took the blanket from her stiffened fingers. His eyes, twinkling... "You're a sport,–" he said... Another train pouring its hundreds onto the dark, smoky platform... Anne shooed them, like frightened sheep, toward holes under sand bags. At the canteen counter, they stopped and were fed.

"Anne! Come here a minute," Joan called from a corner near the counter. She knelt over an old man who lay, crumpled up, along the dirty board floor. By her side stood a small girl with a blue and white checked handkerchief over her head, a bundle in her hand. The child's breath came in and out in long, trembling gasps. She held her lower lip between her teeth. Across her dirty cheeks, tears had worn pink streaks. "He's fainted or something," Joan said. She lifted the old man's head onto her lap. "Go get some brandy..."

The buvette was at the other side of the station. Anne ran... The woman behind the bar poured brown stuff into a thick glass. Anne felt for her purse. She'd left it in her coat. She had a fifty-franc note in her pocket. The woman shook her head. No means of giving Mademoiselle the money, she said. She consulted another woman. Mademoiselle had nothing else? No, Mademoiselle hadn't. Would Madame be good enough to hurry? It was for someone who,– Madame turned to the soldiers in the buvette. Would any of them, perhaps, have the money for fifty francs? The soldiers made merry. Quelle blague! For whom did she take them, they, with their cinq sous par jour! They, who were just returning to the front! There was a laugh. Eh, bien,– they shrugged their shoulders,– C'est la guerre! Ah, voilà! The Américaine, seizing the cognac, putting down the fifty-franc note, running... Fifty francs for a cognac! Six months' pay! These Americans know nothing at all, when it comes to silver. Toqués, ceux-là! The poilus groaned and shook their heads, watching this strange young woman as she ran off.

Anne poured the cognac down the old man's throat. He gulped, opened his eyes. The child beside him gave a little cry, dropped down on her hands and knees, her face near his. The old man's eyes took on a queer, glazed look. So dolls had used to lie in one's lap, staring upward... "Gosh," said Anne suddenly. "I'll bet he's dead."

Joan Porter was laying his head down very carefully on the dirty boarding of the station. She closed the old man's eyes, and laid her handkerchief across the tired, white face. "I'll go and get..." Anne

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picked up the child in her arms, stood next the dead man. Unless you stood here, people would walk on him... The child stopped sobbing... She put her head down on Anne's shoulder and went to sleep... The child was heavy, heavy...

...

To go home and rest a little... To go to bed... Two o'clock in the morning when Anne and Joan staggered out onto the sidewalk by the station. How to get there? Two hours since the Métro had stopped running... Tired... Feet, aching... Two taxicabs stood by the sidewalk, their drivers red-nosed. They would not go to the Rive Gauche, they told Anne. One of them was going, he said, to Clichy; the other to the Place de la République. They shook their heads. 'Pas d'essence,' they muttered. 'Ces cochons d'Américains...' Anne turned away. Somehow, they must get home... "Tenez!" One Red-Nose for a consideration of a hundred francs,– would take them. "All right! Oh," Anne felt her pocket. "I haven't got it. That damned cognac!" Never get to bed... They walked back, wearily, toward the canteen. Mr. Bird stood, unruffled. Perhaps they could borrow... "Send you in an ambulance right away," Mr. Bird said. "You must be all in!" He put his hand on Anne's shoulder, steered her toward the exit. Pleasant to be taken care of... Men were nice when one was awfully tired...

...

In bed at last... Muscles twitching in the darkness... Back aching... Tossing... Tossing... Anne heard Joan's breath go in, in quick, short jerks... A sob... Why, Joan was crying. Why, Anne was crying herself...

...

Somehow, she was waiting at the Downham Station... Waiting for Josiah to come home... The train, giving shrill, queer whistles... Like a French train... Anne stood, looking up and down the platform, looking for the tired, pleasant face, his white, soft whiskers... She and Geoffrey always raced to see who'd be the first to see Josiah... Madame de Mourgues was kneeling by a baggage truck, somebody's head in her lap... Josiah's head... 'He's fainted or something,' she said. 'We will put him in Mademoiselle Eveline's wheel chair. It can go on the elevator to the cellar. He will be safer in the cellar...' Everyone running round... The Colonel was coming down the platform. Everything would be all right, now that he was here, calm, smiling... 'Keep your seats, gentlemen,' he was saying, 'keep your seats...'

...

A report. Short, sharp, stinging, close by. Anne rolled over in bed, looked at her watch. Six o'clock. The morning's first shell... Three hours since you went to bed. Have to have sleep... Ping! Another one, somewhere... They sounded nearer than they had been...

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What did she care? The Germans couldn't cheat her out of that fourth hour of sleep... And yet,– Six-thirty... Six-forty-five... One waited for them... Lay and twitched, thinking 'Now, it must be coming...' Seven, seven-fifteen... Surely they were coming nearer... Seven-forty-five... "Bonjour, Mesdemoiselles!" Clémentine came, on the eight o'clock explosion, with their coffee.

"So we've been up all night," Joan said, stretching.

"So it seems," Anne said. Where was it someone had been born? At the Gare du Nord? That was last night...

...

"Well, we're still here!" Brock said, "all our papers mislaid, but otherwise running smoothly..."

"The Frawgs didn't come today," said the soldier. "Subway ain't runnin'. Say, how we gonna get on without them girls,–" he stopped. The Adjutant entered. 'A great deal of work to be done this morning,' he said...

Little Barnaby came in at noon time, with three lieutenants. He sat down in a corner, yawning. His eyes looked bleary. They did not meet Anne's. When she looked up, he looked down at his boot, and flicked it with his new whip. Just thought he'd report, he said, so they'd know he was still living. Not much to do in Paris after you'd gone broke...

"Your name, Lieutenant?" The Adjutant rushed in, very busy. "Barnaby? Suppose you report downstairs, Barnaby, to Miss Featherstone. She needs someone to help her keep track of the automobiles. And you fellers, go down and see Captain Smith in the Mail Department..." he called over his shoulder to the others as he rushed off... Barnaby stretched himself. 'That cooks our little plan for this afternoon...' he said. 'Oh, Hell!' muttered another. The four went out...

"Say," said Brock, "that kid was all set to fight when he come!" Everyone jumped. Somewhere a shell exploded. "Well," said Brock. "We're still here!"

...

Unbearable sleepiness, descending, smothering, drooping your eyelids, making your head bob forward. Anne jerked herself back. Three o'clock in the afternoon a bad time. She went on typewriting. 'Our plans include 2,000 planes of the Bristol type, to be ready by the first of July. The probability of getting these...' Eyes, closing again... No need to get 'em... By the first of July the damn war would be over... Germans would be in Paris... Hold your head up... Keep going...

...

Saturday... Sometimes one finished at noon on Saturday. Today it was five o'clock before Anne walked out, under the new green of the horse-chestnuts... Mild, soft air waggling the pale leaves. Sifting

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upward from the river... Anne walked slowly. Wonderful to be able to rest a moment... Walk as slowly as you wanted... She would go over to a little flower shop in the rue Saint-Dominique, buy a few flowers for Madame de Mourgues and Mademoiselle Eveline... Their château had burned,– only yesterday that was... It seemed a week ago now...

A line of people stood on the Quai d'Orsay. Anne came closer. Women and children, old men, sitting on trunks, guarding collections of mattresses, and mirrors, bird cages, string bags full of bundles... Two little girls played with dolls, sitting on a suit case on the sidewalk. A tiny boy, perched on a high trunk, yowled. A tired woman, dressed in black, her face framed in a long, black veil, leaned over him. Anne stopped. The mother turned a sallow, tired face toward her. "He is fatigued," she said. "And he has hunger, le pauvre petit! Here are four hours that one has waited thus, to get a train..."

"And where is everybody going?" Anne asked.

"Ah," said the woman, "one escapes. The Boches have bombarded us all the clear evenings during the winter. Now they shoot at us, from long range during the daytime. Ça, c'est trop! If one were alone, it would not matter," she tossed her palms up quickly. "But if one has children, one must quit Paris!" The woman sighed. The little boy wriggled, started to yell again.

Anne walked to the rue Saint-Dominique, and bought cheese, and pain d'épices, a jar of pâté de foie gras, dry biscuits in a cornucopia of newspaper, a bottle of red wine. If only she had a bread card... She carried the things back to the quai. The woman was shoving her trunk along, ten feet nearer to the Gare des Invalides, two blocks off. "Here is something for you to eat, Madame..."

"But Mademoiselle has done a beautiful deed!" Tears in the little woman's eyes. "Surely France will be saved by the Americans, who are so good!"

"If they get here in time," Anne said, as she walked off.

...

Sunday. Anne stood behind a counter at the Gare du Nord. White mugs, into which she poured black coffee, slid them across the oil-cloth... Bread rolls, cut lengthwise, a slice of ham between them... Beyond the oil cloth, faces... Children's faces, dirty, stained with crying, peering up over the white edge... Old faces, lined with pleasant wrinkles,– sad now... Women, weeping... Young girls, tragic, silent ... An old man with a white head, hands that trembled, dribbling his coffee... People coming... Coming... 'Merci, Madame...' Crumbs... Drops on the oil cloth... A greasy rag, that wiped them... Anne's back, aching... Faces... Her feet, throbbing, throbbing... "Come and have supper with me." Mr. Bird, standing behind her. Why, it was seven o'clock,– you'd been here all day,– "Sure, it's all right to leave," he said. "Why, they'll be coming this way all night."

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They went to Montmartre, stood at the edge of a precipice, hands on an iron rail, watching the city in a sea of turquoise... The city noises, dimly... And from the north, a steady boom, boom... "You can't get away from It," said Anne.

"No, you can't," Bird said.

A little old man, in velvet trousers, opening a gate... A table, under the sky... A bottle of wine, a lapereau au jambon, salade... Weariness, changing from a sharp pain to pleasant aching... A squeaky violin,– 'O, Santa Lucia...' They tipped their chairs back, listening, and smoking. The tune finished. A moment of silence, and in that moment, boom, boom. Eclipsed by the clapping of people's hands, and laughter... So little things, always came to dim the great things... Bird pushed his chair back. "Well," he said, "I suppose we've got to go back!"

...

There was a flutter in the office the next morning. "Whose car outside?" Anne hung her hat up. "A limousine, with one star." The Adjutant, here on time... The Colonel's door shut,– why,–

"We got a General downstairs. Moved in yesterday, Him, and a field clerk, two sergeants, two girls,–" Brock, hunting for papers. "He's coming to the meeting. Better hurry."

"Gosh," said Anne, "a General!"

"And two girls," said the soldier in the corner...

...

"Do come down to the General's office." Miss Featherstone took Anne's arm. "I want to introduce you."

"But I've seen the General," said Anne. A small man, who had sat, inscrutable and silent, next the Colonel...

"I mean the others." Miss Featherstone drew her down the hall, down the great stair. Anne's heart thumped. A general's office,– Gosh... Miss Featherstone pushed a white door. A girl sat in a pink plush armchair, smoking... Her white, manicured hand held her cigarette up in a silver holder... 'Yes, I see, but,–' She blew smoke through her nostrils... She listened to a tall, young sergeant, who sat on the mahogany desk, his arms crossed, talking. Beyond them another sergeant, his chair tipped back, legs dangling, talking to a slim, dark, girl with smooth hair and black-rimmed glasses.

"Hello!" The first girl turned her head toward Miss Featherstone. Her hair was blond, Marcel-waved... Her dress, black satin... "Come in. Sit down. Have a cigarette." Miss Featherstone introduced Anne. Miss Rose McPherson, the light one... Miss Rosalie Edwards, – the dark... 'And Sergeant Smith and Sergeant Connors,' the girls, laughing, 'and Mr. Epstein.' They pointed at a field clerk, in the corner. The field clerk was working...

"Saw a man from Montdidier yesterday," the tall, good-looking sergeant went on talking, "he said there was a gap of ten miles between

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the French and British. Said Germans were coming through and riding all around on motor-cycles,–"

"I know," said the dark girl. "I filed a letter,–"

"That's what we do," said Miss McPherson to Anne, "we file His letters,–"

"And there can't nobody find 'em after you've done it, either,–" The field clerk, from the corner. The girls crumpled papers up and threw them at him. "Shut up!" They laughed. They lit more cigarettes. Talk... Talk... One came from San Francisco, the other from Chicago... "Do come again," they said, as Anne rose. "Come in the afternoon and have tea!" The white door clanged behind her.

"So, that's a general's office," Anne said...

...

Afternoon. Tea over,– how boring afternoon got... The Adjutant looked up, suddenly. Brock looked up. The soldier in the corner looked up. A girl swept past Anne, black satin floating, blond hair, in neat waves... "I've come for your scrap baskets." Sophisticated blue eyes, taking them all in... 'Our what?' "Your scrap baskets. The General wants me and Rosalie to collect all the papers every day at five o'clock and burn them. Just dump it in here." She held a basket. "Thanks." She hurried off. Brock raised one eyebrow at Anne.

"Well, that'll give 'em somethin' to do," he murmured.

"Say, it's a great war!" said the soldier in the corner...

...

Evening. Dinner over. Dinners were gloomy, the French people sitting, quiet, waiting... As if everyone were ready to jump and scream at any moment...

"Let's go to a show," said Colt. Queer how it made you restless...

"I can't," said Anne. "I'm working. Heavens, I'll be late..." Anne ran across the bridge. She'd told the Colonel she'd be back at half past eight. Nearly nine now... She gave her name to the Corporal of the Guard... 'The Colonel back yet?' The Corporal laughed. 'He didn't go out till just now...' Anne waited. Sitting alone, in this great, empty building... An hour gone... If he didn't come by ten, she'd go home... Darn him...

"It's mighty sweet of you to do this for me," the Colonel came in, smiling. Anne smiled back. Somehow, your anger melted... "By the way," he settled back in his chair. The girl was angry... Tell her something,– make her feel important,– that's what girls liked... "I talked to Leyssac at the War Ministry today. He thinks that things in Picardy are going better. Fayolle's on his way up to help the British. British Fifth Army, it seems, went all to pieces. Left a great gap between them and the French left. A narrow squeak,– this four days. But here, let's get at this table of organization. The General wants..." They worked. The chart was complicated. Anne

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wrote one page after another. How could the man keep all this stuff in his head? It was late when they finished. Anne was tired. "That's all?" she said.

The Colonel leaned back, pushing against the edge of the desk with his hands. Another day, gone... Had the job moved ahead? You couldn't tell... Like moving a mill stone, shoulder against it, pushing... Tired... The man's square shoulders slumped down. Lonely... Trying to put pep into other people,– bolster them up all day long... Needed bolstering up yourself, sometimes... When you got through these hectic days you needed,– God, was it a woman's knees to lay your head on? To forget,– The man looked up. A girl, sitting across the desk, here... Dark shadows under her eyes... She, too, was tired, lonely... Perhaps,– He smiled at her, slowly.

Anne stuck her pencil under the strap on her note book, looked up,– Good God... What was it the man wanted? The man's face, loosened, somehow... Weakened... That mouth,– a new smile... An invitation in this smile... Ought to have known better than to come here like this, at night, alone... Still, he didn't move. Sat there, relaxing his whole body, his eyes on yours... Good God,– so,–

"I'll get here at seven in the morning... Have these ready at nine." Anne began putting her coat on. Get down stairs... Out of this, quickly... Old fool... Don't let him see you hurry... Wanted to run... To scream...

"I'll take you home." The man was up, reaching for his riding whip, his cap. So he'd scared her... She needn't have,–

"Oh, don't bother," Anne said. "I can walk home." A ghastly, tired, loose look on the man's face...

"Lind! We're going to take Miss Wentworth home. You ready?" That was the Colonel, smiling. Fine, stiff-backed, military... Lind stepped through the glass doors. Anne had forgotten Lind... He made it all right...

The sentinel presented arms. Out in the dappled moonlight the Count sat, waiting. He jumped out of the car. 'Mon Colonel!' 'Mademoiselle!' 'Mon Lieutenant!' He closed the car door. Anne sat between the two men. They moved slowly through the specks of moonlight that fell among the leaves of the horse-chestnuts. Anne felt the Colonel's hand steal over hers. What the,– She pulled her hand up, grasped her hat as though it would blow off. All the way home she held her hat on firmly. The officers pounded on the great oak door to wake the concierge. Anne stood, silent. Damn the concierge... Would he never,– At last the door clicked. 'Good night. Thanks...' The door banged behind her. Anne groped for the dark stairway.

"Bah!" she muttered as she felt her way up...

...

At home, in Downham... Swinging in a high swing, opposite the

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Colonel... 'Push, lazy,' he said... She pushed... But he pushed harder, and they swung up, up... There was a place where you gasped at the top, there... A falling sensation in the stomach as you came down, down, down... And the man opposite you stopped pushing... Looked across at you... A loose look... His mouth,– 'Kiss me,' he said... Your feet bumping... There was a loud crash...

"Air raid," said Joan, raising her head up in the darkness, looking out the window. "Do you think we'd better get up? A bit of shrapnel just came in the window." Anne turned over, burrowed her head down into the pillow. "Oh, Hell," she said...

...

A cab stood before the door, when Anne stepped out into the chill of early morning. A red-nosed, ancient driver, in a white beaver hat, striped waistcoat, grunting over a thing with great wheels,– Mademoiselle Eveline's chair,– tying it upside down onto the seat beside him. Through the open window of the carriage Clémentine and old Jeanne were handing in brown canvas 'sausage' bags and paper bundles... Anne stopped. Madame de Mourgues and Mademoiselle Eveline were in the carriage. "I go to take my sister to the country," Madame de Mourgues said. "The Commandant has told us that those who have not need to stay, should go. In case the Germans come, he says, it will make easier the evacuation."

"Au revoir, Mademoiselle!" Mademoiselle Eveline's thin hand in Anne's. "It is hard to leave! Mais enfin, it seems I shall be less bother in the country." The Américaine, hurting her hand... Saying she would be 'triste' without her... Something, to have made a place in the heart of this strange, young girl... Eveline sighed as she watched Anne stride away, toward her office. "How she is young! And strong, – Miss Venvurt," she said...

...

Anne walked across the bridge. Mademoiselle Eveline's white face ... Those eyes... That haunting beauty... A cripple... Better to die, than to live on, a cripple... In peace-time everyone grew old and helpless... If you weren't killed in war, you muddled through middle age, and ended that way... Far better be killed,– Ping! Somewhere. quite close, a shell broke. So they were in this quarter... You got used to this sensation of gooseflesh, this overwhelming desire to turn and run... No use to run from that one. No need to run, now, for fifteen minutes... You might run into it... Might be walking toward it, right now... No, after all, you didn't want to die young... Wanted to feel more of this stinging sensation that they called Life, a glass of wine, that one was sipping... One didn't want the glass to break till one had tasted,–

"Bonjour, Madame!" Anne bought her paper. 'Allies give Foch Supreme Command of Armies...' That would, perhaps, save them... In the Place de l'Alma old women were unloading market wagons.

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Making great piles of crimson radishes and purple beets and pale green lettuce. Cooks were moving among the tables with their string bags. The old flower woman at the corner held up a bunch of daffodils to Anne, her kind face wrinkled, smiling. 'Des fleurs des bois, Mademoiselle. Très fraîches, Mademoiselle. It is my little girl who has gathered them before it was light this morning... Merci, Mademoiselle!'

Anne took her daffodils and walked on. She looked at her watch, two minutes to the next shell... It would come within a few blocks of here,– She must hurry, must get that chart done early for the Colonel. The Colonel... Bah... Yet,– the Colonel in everyday life was pleasant. Perhaps it was that thing that she disliked that made men pleasant. Upright men, somehow, seemed to be grouchy. The Major at the hospital... Professor Dangerfield... Randolph was pleasant... And he was,– What was Randolph? You had to change your ideas... There was Barnaby, so very pleasant, so steadily, so obviously sliding ... And yet, there was her father,– Josiah, was certainly both good, and pleasant. Josiah had never been to war, though... There were Greenbaum, Bird,– they both were decent... Grouchy, at moments, but sometimes very pleasant... And Geoffrey... You could trust Geoffrey... Yet, even in all that mud, Geoffrey'd be pleasant... "Good morning," said the guard.

"Good morning," Anne said...

...

Typewriting. Shells, every fifteen minutes... Shells landing somewhere, within a few blocks... Everyone laughing, making jokes about the next one... Watching the clock... Listening with nerves tense while one typewrote... Breathing again after the shell burst... The next one,– blooming chart ought to be done before the next one... The window faced north... Shells came from up there... 'Fifteen squadrons'... What good were fifteen squadrons?

...

"Coming to lunch?" said Joan.

"Yeah, wait for me just about ten minutes." Anne's typewriter clattered onward. "The Colonel wants this..." She pulled the page out, stopped to read it over. They all jumped. The floor shook, and glass clattered in the courtyard.

"Christ!" said Brock, "that one came damn close..."

...

A crowd in the market place of the Place de l'Alma. More people than usually came to market... People moving, excited... People talking... 'La Bertha...' 'Un obus...' 'A-ah! Les cochons...' Anne and Joan crossed the square among them. A fire engine came. Men in brass hats and horse tails. 'Vivent les braves Pompiers!' yelled someone. The nervous talk went on...

The market place. Red liquid on the sidewalk, dripping over the curbstone to the gutter... Anne stopped, seizing Joan's arm and gazing.

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In the blood, radishes, turnips, bits of broken glass, beets, potatoes... Lettuce, soaking up blood... The old flower woman, lying among the radishes on the pavement... An arm,– Good God,– her arm, lying in the pile of onions in the gutter... Great pieces of glass from the urinoir at the corner, scattered all among them... A smell of sewerage ... People who pressed in among the vegetables and glass and sewerage ... Anne stood, sick, swaying. An overwhelming nausea, screwed her stomach. Same feeling on that hospital ship at le Hâvre... Damn the old fools that got the world into this mess! The appalling stupidity and nonsense of it... The pompiers were picking up the old flower woman, laying her in an ambulance. Her familiar, wrinkled face fell backwards... 'Les fleurs des bois, Mademoiselle,' she had said, 'it is my little girl...' The crowd was loosening... Why, they forgot her arm ... It lay, among the onions... Anne and Joan walked on.

An old horse stood patiently at the corner of the bridge, a little crowd around him. His hind leg was ripped open from the hoof up to the buttock, blood pulsing from it, streaming along the reddened hair, running away, a dark stream on the pavement... "La pauvre bête!" a French woman murmured. "Ah, la pauvre bête!" An American soldier dodged up to Anne, held up a piece of metal. "Say, here's a piece of that there shell," he said. "Take it, but don't let them Pompey A fellers see you got it. They're huntin' all around here for them pieces. But they got here too late,– ain't any left now."

"Thanks," said Anne, "I,–"

"Make a nice souvenir for you," said the soldier.

...

Evening. The Casino de Paris was full of people. In the lobby they jostled one another, laughing, pressing toward two solemn Frenchmen at a high desk, buying tickets... British officers, French officers, Italian officers, Portuguese officers, Polish officers, American soldiers, girls... The place buzzed with the sound of many voices. Somewhere jazz music, vibrating, making the shoulders jiggle... Through the doorways, cigarette smoke rising, swirling against black and white Persian scroll work... Music... Excitement... Hurry... Among the crowd before the high desk, Joan Porter and Monks, Anne and John McIntyre. Joan clung to Monks' arm, her face transported, shining. How wonderful that he should have turned up today of all days,– that horrid gun,– don't think about that,– that he should be here, taking them on a party... She would rather have sat quietly with him, somewhere, but Monkey adored parties... 'Such a dump, Chaumont...'

Anne stood next to John McIntyre, waiting while Monks got tickets. Good old John... All of Downham, all of home, seemed to come with him when he had walked in at tea time... Memories, that chased away that,– that arm among the onions,– mustn't think about that,– The old woman's wrinkled face as it fell back,– God... Here you were, after an excellent meal at Henri's... Monks certainly could

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order good meals... And poor old Joan didn't care whether food was good or bad,– she preferred beefsteak...

John McIntyre looked down at Anne, smiling. God, it was good to see her! She couldn't know what it was to see a woman from the old life,– after those beastly months of snow and mud, that gas on the Chemin des Dames, two weeks in hospital... Going back to the front tonight at midnight. Mustn't think of that. A long time off yet... And here was light, excitement... Girls, laughing... And you had dined well. That rotter of Joan's knew how to order dinners... They settled into their seats. John groaned. God, a theatre seat... Relaxing... Women,– you mustn't look at them, you had girls with you... Still, a bright aura of excitement in the distance... The curtain rose. Smooth, white legs climbed down golden ladders hung against black velvet. Girls in blue, girls in orange, girls in scarlet... Girls in high, feathered helmets... Legs, waving... Bare arms, necks... Girls singing, smiling, dancing... John McIntyre shifted. Anne looked at him, laughing. So she knew? "God, it's remarkable to be having such a good time!"

At the end of the row two American lieutenants were talking out loud. 'I told yer tha's her, the God damn...' evil words one of them kept repeating. Anne watched a Marine lean from a box, tap the man's shoulder. On the Marine's arm was the red band of the American Provost Marshal. 'Will the Lieutenant be quiet?' the soldier whispering, 'or will he return to his billet?' The Lieutenant, pushing his cap back, subsiding...

The act was over. The crowd wandered, slowly, toward the foyer. Jazz music throbbing, twitching at your nerves, jiggling your shoulders. Tobacco smoke swirling through the Persian scroll work... American negroes, tossing their drumsticks, singing. Crowds moving, talking... Women laughing... Waiters dodging in with glasses, bottles. Anne and John McIntyre, Monks and Joan, edged their way among the tables. A British officer sat at a corner table, svelte, well fitted, sporting, in his turned-down collar, his buttons shining. Across from him a woman poised a cigarette in a long holder, the chic of Paris about her clothes, her figure... Her blackened eyelids narrowed as she puffed smoke. The officer, seeing nothing but the woman. The woman watching an American ambulance driver and a girl at the next table... The American boy patting the girl's cheek, maudlin... The girl, ordering more drinks... 'Ah, ces Américains! They do not know how to live!' Anne heard the woman saying, as she edged past... There was Barnaby. Barnaby and another of the new lieutenants, at a table... A girl, unclasping the Air Service insignia from Barnaby's collar, fastening it on the small black satin hat that she wore... 'Champagne,' Barnaby was saying to a waiter, 'champagne...'

Two Portuguese officers and two women stood, touching glasses across their table. One of the girls could not reach their long arms...

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The men took her hands, tossed her, laughing, up onto the table. The girl threw her hat off, tossed her black curls back, lifted her glass. 'Vive la France!' Cheers, clapping, people laughing... In front of Anne a huge Australian, the turned-up brim of his broad hat a foot above the Frenchmen at his elbows... He stumbled over a table. It fell with a crash of broken glass, before him. He blushed, and reached down clumsy great hands. A woman caught his great hand in two small ones, held it... 'Come on, 'Arry, Hi'm caught,' the great man called across his shoulder... Anne looked back at John McIntyre.

"Long way from Downham," he said. "Gosh, I'm lucky to have you to guard me!" They walked on. Anne was looking at an American major at a table. His overseas cap at a drunken angle across his bald forehead... A French girl perching, laughing, on his knee, patting his shoulder... Another, pouring champagne, holding the glass to his lips, laughing, talking... A captain opposite him smiling, foolish,— why, the Captain was 'Chollie' of Major Salmon's office. The Major,— The Major was Salmon, his dignity all melted... 'Say, girls,' he kept saying. 'Vous dites?' the girls laughed... Anne and Joan turned their faces the other way, walked quickly...

A stir among the crowd. People standing back, looking. A short, thickset French pilot passed, walking quickly, talking to another Frenchman. His face was tanned. He wore a small moustache. 'Fonck!' People leaned forward, turned heads across their shoulders, stood up... The thickset man disappeared toward the street door... 'Jolie, vous,' a Canadian was saying to a small girl at Anne's elbow...

They walked out into the corridor that ran behind the foyer, strolled there. A French girl sat on a broad sofa, her arms clasped tightly round the collar of an American aviator... Three other aviators, walking ahead, swanky in whipcord trousers, low-cut collars... Grinning at their companion, on the sofa... 'For God's sake, fellers, get me out of this!' The three laughed, sauntering forward... From the foyer, jazz music, syncopating... The smoke of many cigarettes, making the place dark... Anne and John McIntyre turned, joined Joan and Monks, strolled back toward the music. A girl, with wide, almond-shaped eyes, strolling toward them, walking with an Italian aviator. The girl looked at Monks intently. Was going to speak,— no, the spark of recognition smouldered, faded... Anne looked at Monks. His eyes were on the girl, blank, withering, his lips curled... The spark died... 'C'est le Moine,' the girl said as Anne passed her... Drumsticks of the jazz players flying higher... Glasses breaking... Women sitting on tables... Standing on them, laughing... Two girls on the knees of Major Salmon... More round his table... Salmon smiling, foolish, hat over one ear... Drinks for all the girls... Somebody singing ... Men's voices taking it up:

"Over there, over there,
Send the word, send the word over there..."

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Women's voices humming... Sharp heels, tapping on the floor in time to the music... Negro jazz players shouting while they played...

"That the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming,
The drums rum-tumming everywhere..."

Spoons beating a tinkling accompaniment on empty glasses. John McIntyre, and Anne, and Joan Porter, and Monks, singing, louder, at the top of their lungs...

"So prepare, say a prayer..."

Major Salmon, kissing the small girl on his knee, bouncing her up and down...

"Send the word, send the word to beware
We'll be over. We're coming over,
And we won't come back till it's over,
Over there!"

They made their way back to their seats. An American soldier, wedged into the crowd in front of Anne, looked down across his elbow at a girl. 'Vous, jolie,' he was saying... 'Compris? No compris?' 'Tu dis?' said the girl... In their seats at last. Joan Porter's hand stole into Monks' hand... His hand closed... John McIntyre leaned back in the seat next Anne. He threw back his head, laughing...

"It's a great war!"

...

The show was over. From the bright lights of the foyer, the crowds plunged out, into the groping blackness, of the unlit street. The chattering voices lowered, sunk to whispers. The night... People grabbed one another, in the darkness,– groped for the sidewalk. Half a block away, at a corner, shone a shaded, blue light... John McIntyre walked beside Anne. A girl grabbed his arm. "Hello, what have I got here?" He looked down. Anne laughed. The girl vanished. People, moving... A crowd still, but the gayety gone from it... Faded with the echo of jazz music... People, pressing close to one another, but separate people now, and lonely, in the darkness... Under the blue, dangerous night, they clung to one another. Tomorrow,–

"We'll take you to the station," Anne said. They followed Monks and Joan Porter through a side street. Monks and Joan still clinging... Anne and John McIntyre keeping step, apart, in the old manner. John laughed.

"I haven't felt so well since I got gassed."

"How does gas make you feel?" said Anne. "Gas is a thing it's hard to forgive the Germans,–"

John McIntyre laughed again. "It wasn't the Germans."

"Who, then?"

"Our own artillery. Some boob in Brigade Headquarters ordered 'em to lay down a gas barrage. Remember Eric Foster? In Geoff's and my class? He's a lieutenant in one of those batteries,– I saw

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nim on my way back. Said the battery commander telephoned to Brigade Headquarters, and told 'em that the wind was blowing toward us. The Brigade outfit said that they had it from the Paris Weather Bureau that the wind was to be southwest and that he was to obey his blankety-blank orders, and to shut up. So he obeyed 'em, and gassed us all up. A lot of the fellers got it worse than I did. The battery commander came up just as our ambulances were pulling out. God, I can see him now, sitting on his horse there, crying..."

"Gosh," said Anne, "gosh."

...

The Gare du Nord seemed empty. The émigrés from one train had been cleared away. The next train had not arrived yet. Along the dirty floor of the station, French soldiers slept. Now and then one would yawn, wake up, load himself with his goods, and trudge off, bending forward, walking with short steps... Tired men, pulling a great load behind them... Out through the sand bags the train for Soissons stood puffing, white steam rising through the dim, blue light... At a gate in a low fence a French soldier and an American stood guard, side by side. A poilu and a woman dressed in black leaned on the fence. The soldier's arm was round the woman's waist. They stood motionless, looking out toward the train that waited... 'Better get on, Sir. There ain't many seats,' said the M.P.

"Well, so long! I've certainly had a swell time..." John McIntyre was shaking hands all round.

"Good luck!" Anne said to him. "I'll write your family."

"Do!" He smiled, saluted, strode past the M.P. Joan and Monks turned to go. Anne stood there, by the fence. Once John turned and waved. Anne waved back. Then he walked on into the smoky blackness.

The man and woman at the fence kissed... Anne turned her head away, embarrassed... She could not pass... Had to stand there... Once more they kissed. The woman's face was white, her eyes closed. The train whistled shrilly, and a horn squeaked. The soldier's arms dropped. He raised his hands to his shoulders slowly, and pushed away her clinging, thin hands. "Dépêche-toi, donc!" yelled the French guard. The soldier ran through the gate, jumped to the moving step of a third-class carriage, clung there, waving, fading into the black smoke. The woman smiled, and waved her handkerchief... She waved again, again, still smiling, till the dim, red light on the train's rear car disappeared into the night. The woman turned. Her face was ashen, dark shadows about her eyes, her mouth a tense white... Anne looked at her. Wanted to say something... Didn't know what to say... It was as if the woman saw...

"This is the third time," she said, "that my husband leaves me for the front. Ah, I say to myself sometimes that I cannot any longer endure..."

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Anne held out her hand to the French woman. "I am sorry, Madame. Very, very sorry," she said in English.

"Merci, Mademoiselle. Bonsoir, Mademoiselle!" Anne shook the limp hand. The slim, black figure scuttled off, among the sand bags...

"For Heaven's sake, come on, Anne!" called Joan Porter...

...

A stuffy horse cab. Joan and Monks gazing at each other... A sort of electric current that passed between them,– that made you uncomfortable in their presence... Anne gazed out the window. The tops of buildings, rolling slowly past you... Love,– a ridiculous madness, that seemed to possess people, to stop their thinking... War... John McIntyre and the French poilu, hundreds of other officers and soldiers, packed on a train, trying to sleep in crowded, blackened carriages, moving out somewhere, toward a mysterious Something... The little French woman, scuttling through the darkness... War, still more ridiculous than Love was...

Anne sat up till one o'clock writing a letter to the kind-eyed woman who lived on the hill at Downham. It was the last word his family at home ever heard of John McIntyre...

...

"Mademoiselle would have the goodness,–" the old Commandant bowed across his coffee cup after luncheon, "to go and see my mother? Today is Good Friday, she has been to mass, and come back very nervous,– these obus which fall,– I am sure you could cheer her."

Madame la Générale's door was ajar. Through the crack Anne could see the little, weazened lady, sitting in a stiff armchair holding above her head a black umbrella. She clasped the handle in first one knotty, wrinkled hand, then in the other. As she changed hands she sighed. In the last war, Madame la Générale had been young and very pretty, people told Anne. Her husband had been a man of prominence under the Second Empire. Now she sat, a crumpled, small, black figure, her watery, faded eyes gazing out across the roofs of Paris... "Entrez! Ah, Mademoiselle! I am enchanted." The old voice was crackly. She let the umbrella tumble, held her limp hand to be shaken. "Pardon! My umbrella. You are perhaps surprised to find me with an umbrella. It was the idea of M. le Capitaine, downstairs. You see, Mademoiselle, I find my nerves a little shaken from this great gun which fires on us so often. You have your work to occupy you, but I, who sit here all day,–" she sighed, shook her old head. "M. le Capitaine has said to me: 'Madame, I assure you that if you will hold your umbrella firmly over your head, you will find yourself no longer nervous.' The system works admirably. I find it an excellent protection!" A smile in the watery, old eyes, increasing the hundred wrinkles that lined the yellow skin. The beauty of 1870 gone, quite gone...

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"You find this war worse than the other war, Madame?" Anne sat down.

"Oh, much worse, Mademoiselle! There is no comparison,– the old Kaiser was a gentleman! He understood the rules of civilized war! There was no fighting against the women and the children. For me, I remained in Paris during all the siege, but I left my children at Fontainebleau. I went down there to see them once a week..."

"But the siege, Madame, how did you get through?"

"I was the wife of a general." The old head went back, proudly, "It was not difficult to get a laissez-passer. That was as war should be, civilized! Whereas this war, Mademoiselle, it is a confusion, no law, no rules. Shells, falling from a distance of one hundred and twenty kilometres! The Germans, thinking to frighten us, to drive us out of Paris! But I am resolute not to quit Paris. Not while my son is obliged to remain here..." Anne rose to go. She shook the old woman's limp hand. She hoped Madame would be feeling well enough to join them at dinner...

"I shall join you at dinner. I am not ill, Mademoiselle, you understand. I am not even frightened! Would you be good enough, Mademoiselle, to hand me my parasol before you go? C'est ça. Je vous remercie, Mademoiselle. Au revoir, Mademoiselle." Anne walked downstairs slowly. That small, black figure, the old hands stiffening about that umbrella... "Civilized war..." Would she, Anne, be sitting somewhere, some day, telling some strange young woman what it had been in the old days, to fight? 'A war to end war... Only that is worth fighting for, my dear! In those days, we...' Joan was standing before the fireplace smoking.

"A shell fell on a church down by the Hôtel de Ville this morning," she said. "It killed fourteen Americans."

"Gosh!" The two stood, looking through the open window at the Eiffel Tower. Silence... At last Joan turned and threw her cigarette into the fireplace.

"Well, all we can do is go on!"

...

The Colonel's automobile was stopping near the curb in the Place de l'Alma when they went back. "He's back early," Anne said. Lettice got out of the car and stood on the sidewalk while it started off toward the office. Then she walked, slowly, in the same direction.

"She's trying not to see us," said Joan. "Queer, the way she goes out with the Colonel all the time,– she engaged."

"You go on all the parties you get asked to yourself, don't you?" said Anne. One felt, somehow, one must defend the Colonel.

"Yes, but that's different, somehow," said Joan. They jumped,– a shell burst somewhere up the river.

"I can't see it," Anne said...

...

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'Oysters and eperlans and fricandeau de veau, and artishows,–' Brock was saying when they came in. 'We had erfs Alma, and haricovares,' said Barnaby, perched on the edge of Brock's desk, his legs swinging...

"The Kernel heard at the War Ministry that the French have taken some town up near Amiens," Brock said. "They think they got the Heinies stopped now. Say, I wish those birds at that War Ministry would answer their telephone,–" he jangled the hook. "Allo. Allo, Maddamusel... I called 'em up at 12:30 and some jane shrieked at me 'C'est l'heure de déjeuner, Monsieur.' 'Say,' I says, 'there's a war on! The Hell with déjeuner!' She didn't compris..."

A sharp *ping*... The half past two shell... 'Movin' in this direction, aren't they?' said the soldier in the corner. 'Lettice went out to lunch with the old man again...' 'Shut up. She's in the next room...' The talk went on...

"There's a Y.M.C.A. man downstairs looking for you, Miss Wentworth." The Adjutant came in, laughing... "Miss Featherstone's got him. You'd better go down and salvage him! She'll kick him out, sure." A Y.M.C.A. man? Who the,– Anne walked downstairs, slowly. Looking for her? Through the glass doors of Miss Featherstone's office she saw a tall, lanky figure, his neck and hands sticking out of his uniform, red-haired, freckled, bending over, peering at Miss Featherstone through thick glasses, talking... Gerald Suydam. Anne had known him long ago, when he had been in college. He had gone into the ministry or some such... Anne stood watching the gawky figure. All you saw of Jerry Suydam when you came close was small, bright eyes, peering at you through heavy, gold-rimmed glasses... Hunting for ideas. Jerry was always hunting for ideas... Finding them... One of his ideas had been God... 'The Church,–' he used to bore you with it... Anne pushed the door open, held her hand out.

"Hello, Anne!" Jerry held her hand and shook and shook it. Why, he never used to think Anne was good-looking,– Now she,– "Come on a party with me? Tomorrow's Sunday," he said. "We'll go down to Chartres or somewhere..."

"You'll have to have some orders or something to show," said Miss Featherstone. "It's hard to get out,–"

"Let's try it," Anne said...

...

"Militaire?" The woman in the ticket window peered at Anne, across Jerry Suydam's shoulder. "Mais oui, Madame. Militaire!" said Anne. Damn the woman... You *must* have a ticket... Must get out of Paris... Away from that perpetual shelling for a minute... You hadn't thought you minded shelling, but now,– "Avez-vous vos papiers, Madame?" the woman, asking... Anne pulled out a paper that she had written on her own typewriter. The Mail Corporal had stamped it with his round thing! 'PASSED BY THE CENSOR.

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U.S.A.'... Jerry laughed. "Shut up!" Anne said... 'Tenez, regardez...' The woman inside turning to someone behind with the papers... God, you wouldn't get out,– "Mais, Madame!" A Frenchman, reaching past Anne, banging the counter... "There are already thirty persons who wait!" His fist banged. He jabbered. The woman handed Jerry Suydam the two tickets. They ran.

"Thank God!" said Anne...

...

"Nous voilà partis!" The Frenchman in the corner heaved a deep sigh. At last, the train moved. Starting, anyway, before a shell fell, – "Heureusement!" said a woman with a white face. "Ah, mon Dieu! The raids of airplanes,– nothing! One does not sleep, but one becomes habituated to that. But this gun, firing every fifteen minutes, oh, la! la!"

"H'm, the cannon is too regular," said the Frenchman. "If one knows that in three, two, one minute, one may be capout," he threw up his hands. "If only the German clock should stop,– if they should wait nineteen, even twenty minutes!" There was a laugh. The French people shoved over, gave Anne a seat between them. Anne put her head back. Outside the window, trees, yellow-green in sunlight... Underneath them daffodils, their gay heads bobbing. In the yards of houses, fruit trees, fairy blossoms... Anne drew a long breath. No more houses here that might fall on you... The park of Versailles flashing past, its lagoon sparkling... Beyond it, yellow-brown, deserted, the façade of the palace... Kings... Kings who had made wars and been thrown out of business... Deep green fields, passing... Trees with tiny leaves, glimmering, greeny yellow... A day freed from suspense, freed from nerves, that tighten... Poor old Jerry standing there in the corridor... Jerry, smiling... Anne's eyes closed. Sleepy...

...

Sunlight came through the rose window of Chartres Cathedral. On the stone floor, it lay in pools of red and blue and purple. Anne and Jerry sat down in little wooden chairs that stood there. Through the slanting beams of color dust, moving, slowly... Specks of dust, just for a minute inspired, dancing in the color... Then disappearing... Life, like that,– a speck of dust that moved through a bright space and moved out... Archways, tall, beautiful, as the arches in a forest... Anne sat there, silent.

Jerry stirred. The seat was low for long legs... A year ago he would have prayed. Now he sat,– A woman, next him... A girl, sitting quite still, beside him... Something happening to him... She was next him... Next him... His God,– lost... This,– filling a blank... Anne...

Peasants came in and knelt about them, telling their beads. A mass being said, bell ringing, peasant women bowing reverent, white-capped heads with little ribbons... Easter... A priest, preaching an Easter sermon. The sun, pouring down color that stole toward Anne's feet

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across the stone floor. A place of peace,– a place of exquisite, heart-rending beauty... Tonight,– Anne stirred a little, one must go back to Paris... Paris,– shadowed by the world's destruction... If one could go on sitting here, in peace, forever... Listen to the gently droning voices... The music... Watch the slanting rays of green and red and purple...

...

"I don't believe in it any more," said Jerry. They wandered down a steep street. Jerry looked at her, eager. A girl, that you could talk to ... A girl, after those weeks in Soissons,–

"Don't believe what?"

"In the religion that I used to preach," said Jerry. "When it came to being chaplain of a regiment, you know, I couldn't stick it. Standing round while other fellers fought, and all that. So I went to Plattsburg. They found my eyes were poor and wouldn't have me. So then I tried enlisting. I memorized the chart to test the eyesight, and then the poor fool doc gave me the wrong one! The only way to get here seemed to be the Y.M. I had the luck to get sent up to Soissons. They tried to make me preach to the boys on Sundays. I found I couldn't. How can you tell a man he's going to Heaven when in ten minutes he may be calling your bluff? You get shells whizzing round you, hear people groaning, pinned under houses,– and you see suddenly that life's too short to kid yourself or other people. Those fellers that are fighting up there know *they* don't know whether there's any God or not, and they know I don't. Some guess there is,– some guess there isn't. Anyone's guess is just as good as my guess, or Christ's, for all that. We don't know. He didn't. He hoped. That's all you can say."

"But I thought you thought Christ was a sort of God-man, who had the inside dope on the next world and this one." They jumped up onto the parapet of an ancient stone bridge and sat there, dangling their feet. Green cress waved in the running water of the moat below them. The uneven spires of the Cathedral touched the sky above the pile of grey roofs.

"I tried to make myself believe that," said Jerry. "People have been believing it for so long. All races have their men-gods. But you and I, Anne, today, know that it can't be so. Nature doesn't do that. That was invented for the mediæval people who were barbarians, and for the Romans, to whom the idea of God's committing adultery wasn't a strange one. The Hebrews didn't believe it, and they probably knew the most about Jesus. I don't mind losing my faith in that,– Jesus becomes a more wonderful person without it." Jerry's thumb packed tobacco clumsily in his pipe. He lit his briquet, puffed it. The smoke twirled up and hung there, in the still air. "It makes him more human. If he were a half-god, why of course he could do anything. Might have done more. But being a man, it becomes rather a wonderful story, that one."

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"Yes," said Anne.

"The trouble is, I've lost God, too, Anne." Jerry, troubled...

"Seems to me," said Anne, "Gods are just like the dolls we used to play with: as long as you believe in 'em, they live. When you stop, they go out, pouf! All gods are alike, once people have stopped believing. Jupiter and Jehovah are equally real now, aren't they?" Anne looked at him. Hadn't been easy for Jerry to give up God...

"How can you go on telling people there's a Heavenly Father," said Jerry, "watching over 'em, caring, guiding things, when you're in the middle of a mess like this one? God fighting on our side,– on anyone's side? It's ridiculous! If God is good, if he's omnipotent, if he cares,– why, he's a fool to let the world go crazy like this. No, it isn't God, it's men. You've got to make men see that men are acting for themselves, not being guided. You can't shove it off on God,– this is their own mess."

"Yes," said Anne, "that's what I think."

"There's just one good thing to be said for 'em," said Jerry, "and that is that they're brave enough to face the music. The fellers up front, anyway, are brave enough to stand up and admit that there isn't any God: it's men that have made the world what it is. They're just throwing their lives on a Scrap Heap, that's all. There isn't any Heaven,– Heaven was supposed to be right here,– and it isn't. They've missed it. That's why they cling to Life. That's why, the night before an attack, they're not thinking about Heaven, but thinking about Life, and what it might be, and what it has been."

"That's a step, isn't it?" said Anne. "If they're really getting to face the facts?"

"Yes, and the world'll never get any better until we get the courage to see that it will be just what we make it and that God won't help us. That there isn't any other life to live,– just this one, so if we do a bum job on it,– why we miss Heaven. If you invent a Heaven to escape to, you're kidding yourself,– that's all."

Anne smiled: "I'm glad you've stopped kidding yourself, Jerry."

"It's a tough proposition when you first see through it." Jerry knocked his pipe against the parapet. "Your comfortable support on earth, the Greater Life to follow,– all gone. The peg that you were hanging on and trying to make others hang on, pulled out." He sat, staring. Anne jumped down. Hungry...

"There's a satisfaction in facing Truth, though," she said. "No more camouflaging. And an enormous Beauty." She looked up. Sunlight, making shadow behind the ancient gateway of the city... Roofs, piled on one another... Above the roofs, the uneven spires of the Cathedral pointing skyward... Too bad Jerry was nearsighted... Couldn't see it... "While it lasts, it is a pretty good world, Jerry!"

...

Up the steep, narrow street, they wandered slowly. "Wonderful,

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not to be shelled, isn't it?" said Anne. "To know that you'll be safe for more than fifteen minutes."

"Wonderful not to see things all in crumbling piles," said Jerry, "Soissons,–" A peasant woman in a starched cap bade them good morning. They should see, she said, the 'Escalier de la Reine Berthe,' just next door. They followed her through a carved door in the stone wall and up a narrow, spiral stairway... The woman's shoes went clop, clop on the worn stones. Anne followed, looking upward. Where were they going? Jerry came behind, his bony hands against the stone walls. Anne, going ahead, there... Suddenly, a queer feeling, coming, – Jerry stopped. A ray of sunlight from a slot in the stone wall fell on the girl ahead, as she stood a minute, looking upward. She laughed. He moved toward her. 'Anne...' But she turned, went on... Up, up... That was right, that they should be going upward... What did the old world matter? What did God matter? This was a new world... This was,–

A small, round, empty room, with a stone fireplace, an open window. Anne went in. Roofs, pink and purple in the sunlight, sloping downward... Jerry, bending his head to come through the low door... The old woman, looking at him, smiling... Anne went and stood beside the open window. A feeling,– What was it? Something, in this small, round room... Life, pulsating, vivid... The whole, small room, filled with,– Jerry came and stood next her, looking at her.

"Nice view," said Anne. Jerry did not turn toward the window. Something,–

"And who was the Reine Berthe?" she asked the woman. Better talk... This small, round place trembling now, with something,– The room too small to hold it... "On ne sait pas, Madame." The old peasant woman watched them. Ménage d'amoureux, ça... But the girl, precipitating herself down the stair... The soldier, running after...

Anne plunged down the stone stair, fingers against the damp wall. What had it been, so suddenly, in that small room? 'It seems, Madame,' the woman's voice, on the stair behind her, 'that she was an adventuress, the Reine Berthe!' Outside, in the sunshine, Anne laughed. Jerry's nearsighted eyes gleaming at her through his glasses ... His awkward, homely head thrown back, mouth open, laughing... The old woman's wrinkles deepened into a wise smile. She shook her head as she stuffed the silver franc piece in her pocket. Ah! Avoir vingt ans, avec du soleil plein le cœur!

"Come on, let's go to the Grand Monarque and eat," said Anne. "I'm hungry."

...

They walked out into the open fields. The Cathedral grew small in the distance. A shower came suddenly from the westward. They climbed a fence and sat with their backs against a pile of turnips. The shower, passing... The Cathedral across the fields... Over it a

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rainbow, arching... Gerald Suydam lit his pipe and puffed it. So she could sit there, next him, and not feel,– Queer life... He watched her. Her face white, tired... She smiled, gazing at the rainbow, pointed a finger upward. He edged away. God, how he'd like to touch her... Mustn't... You didn't do that... He got up, stretched his long arms. 'The shower's over.' She was up, brushing her skirt beside him.

"Come on," she said, "let's go back."

...

"Take 'em to the cellar. Take 'em to the cellar," the Adjutant was standing up in the hall outside his office. Soldiers were moving the mahogany desks out when Anne came in. In the hall outside, there stood a row of wooden, kitchen tables. The soldiers struggled past with the Adjutant's desk, upended. On a new, white deal table, Brock was piling papers.

"What's the idea?" Anne hung her hat up.

"The General made an inspection Saturday," the Adjutant confidential, nervous... "Said the place didn't look military. Said we'd spent too much money. Said if Pershing came down, he'd be liable to jump us,–"

"So we're puttin' our desks in the cellar and buyin' a few simple, deal tables," drawled Brock.

"And spending more money?" said Anne...

...

"Tout le monde quitte Paris en ce moment!" Madame Bassot's thin hand rested on Anne's desk, the gold ring on the third finger slipping down, hanging against her knuckle... Madame Bassot was the widow of a professor of the Sorbonne. Professor Dangerfield, expert on metals, had brought a letter of introduction to her husband and had found, when he presented it, that Alexandre Bassot had been killed, two weeks earlier in an air raid. He found the professor's widow and a child of five facing starvation. 'If I could serve myself with a machine to write?'– Madame's proud cheeks had colored,– 'the Americans, would they employ me?' So Madame had turned from her piano to a typewriter and, after ten days' hard work, had come to be Professor Dangerfield's Secretary in the Avenue Montaigne.

"I have taken my little girl yesterday to the country." Madame sighed. "The little one cried, sadly, when I left her. But the past week has been intolerable,– sitting at work, thinking always of the obus falling near her!"

"But you will stay yourself, Madame?" asked Anne. Nine of the French stenographers had left on Saturday... Two more this morning ... But Madame Bassot was not like the others...

"But certainly, Mademoiselle! This is my post. I will stay until the day when the Germans arrive, if they are to arrive. Et vous, aussi, Mademoiselle?"

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"Et moi aussi," said Anne...

...

The golden sun of an April afternoon touched the grass along the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne into uncanny greenness. It played on the green yellow of the new leaves and on the brown yellow of the damp sand beside the pavements. Anne walked with Colt of the Intelligence Service. They'd lunched at the Pré Catalan, in the Bois. Had lingered over liqueurs, watching the people... It was Saturday. Anne was to work tomorrow, today she was free. She kept step with Colt as they walked, briskly, among the playing children. Yellow light smiling... Paris...

"It makes you almost forget how bad the week's been,–" Anne's sentence stopped. There was Randolph. Randolph strolling toward her, slender in his black and red, his French cap tipped... Randolph, tall and nonchalant and graceful... Beside him walked a woman, chic in the slenderest of dark blue costumes, broad cuffs and a collar of white satin, a hat of white felt, pulled down over straw-colored hair, long slender ankles in white stockings, feet in high-heeled, stubby French shoes... The woman was talking, making gestures with her white glove. The sun shone on their faces... Anne walked on slowly, puzzled. Should she bow? Why not? She knew nothing about this woman... Randolph looked up, saw Anne. Good God, there was the old life, intruding unreasonably into this one... Randolph, too, stopped in the sentence he was forming... Flustering, to have Anne's clear eyes on you...

"How do you do?" Anne said, and went on walking. Queer to be saying, 'How do you do' to Randolph... Randolph hesitated a second. Then he saluted, walked on. Amélie Delsart raised almond-shaped eyes under long, beaded lashes, stared at Anne... 'Tiens! But in France' she said to Randolph, 'one waits for the gentleman to bow first...'

"Who's your friend?" Colt asked Anne as they walked on. "Fine-looking feller for a Frenchman."

"He's an American," Anne said. "Randolph Pendleton,–"

"What? Pendleton? The American ace? Really?" Colt looked back at the tall figure. "He brought down three more planes up on the Somme, only two days back. And the woman is one of the swell members of the demi-monde,– she's in with some French senator or someone, they say. At any rate, she's one of the few people in Paris allowed to run an automobile. You have to have a big drag,–"

Anne smiled. "France is a queer place," she said...

...

She found Joan reading a paper in the window, when she got home. She sat down on the bed, put her feet up, lay back, hand on her forehead. While you were stirring round, you felt all right. But when you stopped, there came a feeling,– one must not think of weariness...

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Yet, life had been a tough race for the past week... Extra work... And those sharp, quick explosions... Must not be tired...

Anne lit a cigarette and watched the smoke drift toward the window.

"The trucks are back again at Aviation," Joan said. She sat, looking at her paper. She shook it, folded it. "Listen to this: 'Many of us are now tired,'" Joan read.

"I'll say we are!" Anne laughed.

"But listen!" Joan was serious. "'To those I would say that victory will belong to the side which holds out the longest... Every position must be held to the last man; there must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall, and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must fight on,– to the end. The safety of our homes and the freedom of mankind depend alike on the conduct of each one of us at this critical moment...' That's Sir Douglas Haig, Anne." Joan let the paper fall to her side. "The Colonel told me he'd send André for us if they decided to evacuate in the night. Gosh, Anne, what do you suppose is going to happen?"

Anne looked through the open window. The last rays of the sun were shining on the steel spike of the Eiffel Tower. "We've never really considered that we might not win this war," she said. "It looks now as if they'd beat us before the U.S. Army gets here."

"We've got four American squadrons nearly at the front," said Joan.

"Four squadrons! Gosh! After all that work..." They sat there, silent. The light died on the Eiffel Tower. A little chill crept in the window from the courtyard.

"Well, we'd better put a few things in a suit case," Anne said...

...

French girls. The office seemed to be crowded with them Monday. High-heeled shoes with stubby toes, light-colored stockings... Skimpy, short skirts and brightly colored blouses... Reddened lips, bright eyes that searched, furtive, from under hat brims... It was known, one of them explained, that girls were wanted to do the stenodactile. They waited for the Adjutant to come back from his luncheon. They eyed each other, giggled... Madame Bassot came in to leave a report for the Colonel. She stood a moment, looking at the girls. The giggling faded ... Died out... "But it iss terrible," Madame Bassot turned to Anne, speaking slowly, in her imperfect English, "terrible that these women should come here. Why is it that they allow them? Oh, la! la!" She went out. The girls whispered...

The Adjutant tipped his chair back behind the barricade of his deal table. He looked at each girl, listened carefully to her few words of English. The pretty ones, he hired. "Gotta have somebody to make all these copies for the War Department," he said, across his shoulder. Brock looked at Anne, one eyebrow raised high. "Ye-a-a-ah," he drawled. "Upstairs. Upstairs. UP, up!" the Adjutant was saying,

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pointing toward the ceiling with his finger. The girls looked at him, giggled, looked at one another, whispered... 'A-a-a-ah!' They understood... They tripped off, flourishing silk stockings, and casting looks back across their shoulders...

"Say!" Brock rumpled up his hair, "ain't it a great war?"

...

Tea time. One worked hard, now,– was glad to stop at tea time... Rose McPherson was perching on Anne's desk, tea cup in hand. She set it down suddenly, eyes on the door. Randolph walked in, very tall in his black uniform, French cap a bit to one side. He stepped toward the Adjutant, saluted, stiff, military. The Adjutant set his cup down, stood up, sat down again,– the man was only a sergeant... My God, he had the presence of a general... Oh, he'd come to see Colonel Henderquist, had he? At the Colonel's request. Oh! Just a minute... Randolph turned, waiting. "Hello," said Anne. Randolph, scowling. "What the devil do they do with all these women? Never seen so many girls in my life as there are in this galère,–"

"Mr. Pendleton?" Lettice stood, very pretty, in the doorway. Randolph disappeared behind the white door. Rose McPherson turned to find her tea cup. "Pendleton? The ace?" she said. "Gosh!"

Randolph stopped by Anne's desk as he went out. "Will you dine with me tonight?" he said quickly. Rose McPherson again put down her tea cup, smiling this time. Wait till she told Rosalie she'd been introduced to Pendleton, the great ace... A young god,– "Sure," said Anne. "I want you to meet..." But Randolph was gone...

...

"C'est un Américain," Germaine whispered, "he awaits Mees Ventvort." Germaine and Christiane stood in Madame de Mourgues' salon, eyeing Randolph.

"He has the air of being a French pilote. Et puis, il est beau!" Christiane turned, looked at her oval face in the dim mirror. She was far prettier than Mees Ventvort... With two slim fingers she arranged the frizzy bang across her forehead. If only that young man would look,– He might see,– Might request Maman that he be introduced... Might,– Miss Wentworth came in, dressed quietly in dark grey, a black hat. They watched her go up to the young man, shake hands. 'Hello' she said, as though she were talking on the telephone...

"I do not find her pretty at all," Christiane whispered. "Her face is white, drawn. She works, without doubt, too hard." And yet that tall young man was smiling, hurrying after her, talking to her across her shoulder as they went out... Christiane went to the window, looked down. Anne and Randolph strode, keeping step, along the pavement, round the corner... Christiane sighed. If only one were permitted to dine at restaurants with young gods...

...

"Where were you during all this mess?" Anne asked Randolph.

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They walked down the Quai d'Orsay. The spotty sycamores dangled a faint tracery of green against the blue shadows underneath the bridges...

"Flying from a place called Saint-Just, on the Oise. Believe me, Anne, this last battle up in Picardy was a close thing! It was the French that turned the trick up there. Don't let anybody talk to you against the French, Anne. Some of these Americans are apt to,—"

"Yes," said Anne, "I know..."

"If you'd been up there where I was last week, flying over the British line, and looked down on a line of tiny little brown creatures and seen it waver and curve, and start to break,— the little brown things running... And if then you'd seen a whole lot of little blue things come up among 'em, and watched the line straighten up and go forward, forward, back to where it was,— why you'd know what it is that the French can do for the rest of us. It's a spirit! When things get perfectly desperate, and everyone's down and out, it takes the French to put the stuffing into everyone and make 'em go on!"

"I know," said Anne.

"The French are the real heroes of this war, you know, Anne. The British are wonderful of course,— but that Fifth Army,—" Randolph shook his head. "And those Portuguese over by Armentières... They say they,— Well, it's all in the game. They're played out. God, Anne, do you think America will ever get in?"

"We're putting four squadrons at the front," said Anne.

"I know. Your Colonel there called me in to see him,— he used to be a friend of Mother's. I thought I might get a squadron when my transfer came through. Instead of that, he asked me if I'd like to command some school back at Issoudun. Said Mother'd written to him,—"

"Mothers have an idea the rear is safer," said Anne. "They're wrong. But what did you say?"

"I told him I'd go where I was ordered, of course, but if it were up to me I'd see myself in Hell first. He said it would mean a colonelcy in the end. Damn it," Randolph whacked his puttee with his whip, "I'd rather be a French sergeant flying a Spad than one of these old colonels... What do they wear spurs for, anyway, in that office of yours? And who the deuce is that pretty girl that takes you to the Colonel, and sits and listens,—"

"That's the Colonel's stenographer," said Anne.

"The deuce she is," said Randolph. They were crossing the Place de la Concorde now. Suddenly a taxicab came at them, put his brakes on, whirled two circles. The driver, with his head out, yelling, scolding... "By God, you're safer at the front," said Randolph...

...

The restaurant in the Place de la Madeleine was large, and full of people. Hors d'œuvres, that made your mouth feel impatient...

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Randolph watched Anne, eating. She had met him with a woman... He was engaged to her cousin... The time had come when,– The alerte sounded in the street outside. A syren passing, shrieking, fading ... A reserved bustling... Lights being put out... Waiters hurrying... French people paying their 'additions,' and leaving... The place was empty, save for Anne and Randolph and a single table of Red Cross workers. Lights only at their tables. Hovering, in the darkness, the shirt-fronts of waiters... Now he'd– "Anne," he began. She looked up from her artichoke. It was coming,– the explanation of the lady with the pale hair. Randolph, looking uncomfortable...

"Want some Grande Chartreuse?" he said quickly, "it's good." Hell, why should he explain whom he went about with? It was after all his affair, not hers... And he'd be dead soon,– Yet, if she should write, – If she should tell,– She wouldn't. Anne wasn't that kind. But she might do it innocently,– thinking it was a friend, a cousin, an aunt she'd seen on the Avenue du Bois... It would not be the first time he had bumped against the appalling ignorance of northern women. She wouldn't do that, either... Anne Wentworth had been nearly a year at war now... They paid their bill, strolled out to the dark street. The boulevard was dark, deserted, empty. Overhead, stars in the black sky. The distant ker-bum, ker-bum of anti-aircraft... Blue letters, "REFUGE" over the entrance of the subway.

"Let's go sit," said Randolph. "We can't get anywhere,– nothing to ride in." Crowds, sitting on the slanting stairway... They picked their way among them. On the edge of the subway platform, they sat down, legs dangling idly over the track. Randolph gave Anne a cigarette, took out his briquet... He watched her sitting, puffing. Her eyes on the steel rails below their feet there... Anne, humorous, boy-like,– ~~the one link between him and the old life~~... A life that had faded, grown unreal... A life that you had pushed away for fear, in thinking of it, you should lose your grip... You must live in the present... Bullets, sizzling past you... Your bus swinging through the air, zooming, coming over, diving... Below, that limpid emptiness of clear space... Earth, like a blue map, way off... Moments of luck, when you escaped by the barest hair's breadth... Death, charging... And you laughing at It, tossing It back across your shoulder... And then again down... The old earth, bumping... Your nerves loosening, loosening... Scaring you... So that you'd rush at pleasure, snatch at, suck it dry, lest this should be the last time,– The future,– a blank. A blank that you must keep there. Old Garlough, three nights ago, hadn't come back That hour of waiting on the field, searching the clouds against the sunset for him... Shooting up Vèry lights, and watching, watching, watching... Till your eyes ached. He hadn't come back. His blouse, his belt, still hung on the nail in the shack door,– you couldn't touch it... It loosened your nerve to see them go like that, one after another... Tomorrow you'd,– Mustn't think about it.

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Think of the present. Keep the blank there. Dance, on the Precipice's edge. Not look across it.

Anne held her cigarette end over the tracks and dropped it. She put her hands into her pockets, smiled at Randolph. She'd keep still... He wanted to talk... Men were that way,– here. All you had to do was sit and wait for them to begin. Randolph shifted. If only she'd say, 'Who was the pretty lady?' or something like that... She sat there, quiet, swinging her feet... "It's a queer life!" he said.

"Yes."

"You never know when it's going to stop. That's what does it. You see fellers come down in flames every day. Know some day you'll,– Lonely, there in the sky all by yourself, too,– the world a little picayune bit of map showing through the clouds. Beautiful,– a wonderful beauty about it when you go up at dawn, Anne. Then the excitement, the bullets whistling, the frenzy to get the Boche before he gets you. Then you come down, and find the world all flat and boring. Rain, that keeps you from flying for days, weeks. Games of craps and poker... Men, all alone together. Liquor. After a while, you have to cut loose, go somewhere, somewhere civilized, talk to somebody who understands war. Nobody in the U.S. understands it in the least, Anne, do they?"

"How can they?" said Anne. "It's as if they were on another planet, too far away to see what we are doing."

"That's it," said Randolph. "Rosalind and I were pretty near together when I left home. Now her life seems like a dream to me. The two planets are a damned long way apart, Anne! You saw me yesterday with,–"

"Yes." Anne wriggled back on the platform, braced her hands on edge. Now, it was coming...

"Met her last winter," he said. "There'd been two weeks of rainy, black days along the front,– nothing to do. They let me off for two days. I came to Paris. Nobody'll ever know what it is to come to Paris,– feel pavements under your feet, see lights, hear women laughing... I ran into a French officer that taught me to fly down at Avord. He took me to Amélie Delsart's apartment. It was full of soft light, and warmth and beauty,– all the things you want in war-time, and that you can't have. And,– well it just got so that I couldn't get on without it. After two weeks along the front I'd fly down. They don't say anything as long as you do your stuff right,– France believes in making life bearable, even in War. She and I go to concerts, operas. She cares for music, cares for Art, for,– for,– She's,–" He stopped, sat, gazing at the tracks. "I've hauled myself back from dizziness in a tail-spin," he said, "just from wanting to see her face once more." He stopped. Anne couldn't understand that...

"You love her?" said Anne.

"Yes. The way I fly. The way I live, now,– never looking ahead,

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just enjoying, wondering at the,– at the,–" Stuck again... Anne sat, silent.

"She keeps your wits sharp, too," said Randolph. "She's in with some government outfit. She knows what's going on in the damned war. A man she cared about was high up in the army. He got killed two years back, and now, it seems, ridiculously enough, she cares for me. I haven't anything to give her, God knows! We dine, go to the opera. All the rest, she gives me. I suppose she does it for France. She thinks that we are going to save France." Randolph watched the clear profile next him. Was she shocked, then?

"And Ros?" Anne asked.

"You'll laugh at me," Randolph swung his long legs, in their polished puttees, "but I care for her, too. The same way I care for you and Geoff, only much more. You don't understand that. Women, you see, can only care for one man at a time because the caring is somehow in them. It takes them all up. But for a man, love almost *is* the other person. It's something outside you, that pulls you on. There can be as many kinds of love as there are kinds of women you're in love with. I care for Ros the way I care for,– well, comfortable old clothes,– a sunny day and a canoe down by the river. She rests me, makes me happy. For the other, it's the way I care for the feel of a plane zooming, or for the clouds, or for the quick pac-pac of a machine gun. She excites me, makes me want to get out again and into it; makes me love France and,– and Life, and,–" People were walking past along the tracks now, disappearing into the dank cavern of the subway. Randolph jumped down, and held his hands for Anne. "Come on!" he said. They walked through the drippy, silent tunnel of the Métro.

"Then, you see, there's Mother. That made it all frightfully complicated at home," said Randolph. "It naturally knocked her up a bit to have me say I wanted to get married, just as she'd thought I was coming home at last to make her happy. She was wonderfully brave though,– said she'd be penniless, but she'd get on somehow,– and then if I got killed she'd feel she had my wife on her hands. That's why I'm swapping into our army, so I can take out this war risk insurance for her. It was Mother that made me see I couldn't get married before I came over. I never could bear to see Mother miserable,–" Silence. They climbed the steps to the Place de la Concorde. "Well, what do you think about it? Are you going to cut me off, Anne?"

"Life's too short now to cut people off," said Anne.

"Even if you don't approve of 'em?"

"Even if you don't." Out, into the night air... The square was empty as they walked across it. Randolph looked up toward the stars.

"Those old Huns have got a rare night to bomb in..."

...

"Et ton amie? She was annoyed to have seen thee with me on the Avenue du Bois?" Amélie Delsart poured black, steaming coffee into

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a cup, its smell rising, pungent, strong with chicory. A tall window stood open to the yellow, morning sunlight. In the sunlight, two bergères. Between them a little table. Distance, that came with morning... She handed Randolph his cup across the little table.

"A little annoyed." Randolph dipped a piece of buttered bread into his coffee. From the street, hidden by plants on the balcony, he could hear people, passing... Luxury to sit here, unseen, in the sunshine... "She did not say so," he said. "Her brother is fighting in the Toul sector. He is my best friend." That would explain Anne... Rosalind, – He could not speak her name to Amélie... The two worlds, separate ... Sun on Amélie's pale hair...

"Tell me, the American Colonel of Aviation," she raised her cup up, – "the friend of thy mother, what did he want of thee?"

"To offer me a safe position in the rear. Commanding a center of instruction."

"And thou?" She set her cup down, leaned forward. "What didst thou say, mon chéri? Thou hast accepted?"

"No."

"Ah!" She threw her white hand out, across the table. The drooping sleeve brushed the silver. "I knew it! How thou art brave, mon ami! If all Americans are like you, we shall win!"

Randolph gazed at the balcony. Rosalind... Geoffrey... "They're a damn sight better than I am," he said, in English. She looked at him. It was the first time he had ever said anything in English... "Tiens!" she murmured...

...

Morning. Rainy. Anne walked under her umbrella toward the office. Tired... Horrid to be tired in the morning. Cold... Damp... For five weeks there had been only two days when it had not rained. If only one could lie in hot water, relax... One never relaxed. Damp feet got on your nerves worse than the big guns. Nothing would matter if you could have a hot bath... Coward... Three weeks since Geoffrey had had his clothes off. Their feet wet, up there, all night. Cowardly to think of hot baths... You couldn't help it... Rain, making little splashes on the steel-grey surface of the river. A foul smell from the urinoir at the corner. The French were dirty... 'Don't let anyone say anything to you about the French, Anne.' Amélie Delsart was beautiful... Anne's head ached. Neck felt stiff.

...

A new young captain was waiting for the morning meeting when Anne came in. Tall, dark-eyed, in a uniform cut like the British, he leaned nonchalantly against a chair arm, gazed out the window.

"Er, this is Captain Kingsley," Professor Dangerfield touched the young man's arm, "come to give us technical advice on airplanes..." The young man turned, slowly, and smiling held his hand out. Suddenly the hand trembled, waggled from the wrist like poplar leaves in

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the wind. The young man flushed. Anne grabbed the hand and shook it. The young man strolled toward the window. Anne watched him put a cigarette between his lips, strike a match, raise it. The hand shook so that the match went out. He tried again. It took three matches. 'Keep your seats, gentlemen...' The meeting was beginning.

".... perhaps Captain Kingsley will give us his advice about the Nieuports. There's a chance that we may get enough Nieuports from the French for two more squadrons," said the Colonel.

Kingsley's brown eyes turned slowly toward the Colonel. His fingers twitched a little on the arm of his chair. "The pilots don't like 'em," he said.

"But have they any reason for their opinion?" The Majors and the Captains looked at the slim young man with the bronzed face.

"Well, you see," slowly, "the trouble is, the wings fall off the Nieuports. They let you down, suddenly..." The Majors and the Captains looked at the Colonel. The Colonel, smiling: "But if you can't get others?"

"And there's a gasoline connection that gets loose. Sets 'em on fire." The young man gazed out the window. "You see," he said. "It's bad for the morale, that burning. After you've seen two or three of your friends burn up,–" Kingsley smiled. The Majors and the Colonels in the armchairs shifted.

...

Afternoon came. Anne's head still ached. She went on typewriting. Captain Kingsley sat in the red plush armchair in the corner, fingering his whip. All the morning he had sat there, doing nothing. He got up now, and wandered. Round the room... Behind you... Mustn't let yourself mind, must go on working... Finish this letter from the Colonel to the French Air Ministry... Kingsley stopped beside Anne and read what she was writing. 'Request that we be delivered as soon as possible twenty-four Nieuport planes.' The keys flying... Kingsley pulled on his British overseas cap.

"Let's go and get a drink," he said to Barnaby, who passed the doorway...

...

Time to go home at last. Anne followed Joan down the white stone stairway. If you could only have a hot bath when you got home,– Good Madame Bassot, waiting for them on the street, her crêpe veil blowing. "Mesdemoiselles, I,– There is something,– I think I ought to warn you. I feel I have a duty toward you, who are so young. The cabinet de toilette,– là-bas,– you ought not to avail yourselves of that. Those girls, who work upstairs, are, you understand,–" Anne and Joan looked at one another. Good Madame Bassot standing, blushing...

"We understand," said Anne...

...

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Evening. Anne walked through the blackness. Raining, thank God, they wouldn't be able to bomb you. Making her way toward the Hôtel Pétrograd. A hot bath... A hot bath... The idea an obsession... Couldn't forget it... Had to have one... Cure this dull, aching feeling ... Anne walked past the white-haired lady at the desk, calmly, going straight for the stairs. The lady smiled. The lady's job, that,– smiling... Curved, marble stairway. Ancient crimson, musty smelling carpets. Anne trembled. Cold, or was it with excitement? Surely there'd be some trick about the bathroom... Locked, or something... A door slammed. Over her shoulder, she saw a femme de chambre, coming. She walked ahead, quickly, and dodged around a corner. The word BAINS in big black letters... The door was open, thank God. She went in, bolted it behind her. The tub was long, and made of china with a blue pattern on it. It stood on a wooden platform. Anne turned one of the quaint faucets on the wall above it. Water steamed forth. She watched it, fascinated. Then slowly she began taking her clothes off.

She slipped down into it, sank onto her back. She shut her eyes. Marvellous the lightness of your body. Heaven, perhaps, would be a sea of steaming water... Losing one's body in it... Outside, somewhere, she heard the syren screaming. She lay, relaxed. Too bad to tighten up a muscle... Fists, pounding at the door. 'L'alerte, Mademoiselle! Il faut descendre!' cried the maid's voice. Anne lay quite still. Damn the alerte! Geoffrey would like this... Geoffrey, up there in the mud, fighting to make the world safe... Safe for hot baths... She must get out. She took hold of the tub with both hands, pulled her heavy body. Her skin, pink all over... Queer... The light was going out. No, it was there still,– middle of the tin ceiling. Her own eyes, that were going queer, so she could not see it. She took hold of the chair, but it went through her fingers, and she slipped downward, past it...

...

A light above her head. Pipes running past it along a ceiling. A small white painted ceiling, made of tin. Ceiling of a bathroom. Bathroom of the Hôtel Pétrograd where she had had a hot bath. Anne was cold and shivering. She must have fainted... Well, when you hadn't had a hot bath for nearly a year,– She got up, and put her clothes on quickly. "Worth it," she said, as she tied her necktie.

"I'm afraid that you won't find a taxi,– everything's stopped, you know," said the white-haired lady in the office. Anne went out into the black street. "I'll have to walk, then."

...

A girl came into the office in a neat uniform of olive drab next morning. Anne looked up from her typewriter. It was Lettice. Good Lord... She wore a broad leather belt, with shiny brass hooks, and a small, grey felt hat. Lettice dumped a small brown bag down in the

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corner and glanced a little proudly in the mirror. She took off her mannish hat, arranged the fuzzy curls against her pale cheek. Brock tipped back, looking at her, one eyebrow going higher. "Say!" he muttered. She turned on him, staring mildly with her round eyes... "Good morning," he said, and went on working. Anne turned to her typewriter. Must not smile... Lettice disappearing into the Colonel's office.

"Glad she's got that hook to hitch her gun to," said Brock.

Anne looked at Joan Porter. "What's the idea?" she said...

...

The Colonel was motoring to Tours that day. Before he went he dictated a letter to G.H.Q. Anne hurried to get it finished. "He ought to sign this before he goes," she said to Brock.

"He's gone downstairs already."

"Give it to me!" She'd catch him in the guard room... There he was in Miss Featherstone's office, he and Lind, and Lettice. What was Lettice doing? Her hands in the pockets of a trench coat that was too big. Holes in the flaps across the shoulders where insignia had been unpinned. Miss Featherstone, patting Lettice on the shoulder. "Have a wonderful trip!" Lettice, blushing a little. The Colonel signed the letter. "Good work, Miss Wentworth! I'd forgotten,– Good work!"

Anne and Miss Featherstone stood in the open window, watching them get in, André at the wheel, the Colonel and the Adjutant in the back, Lettice between them. They waved as the big car rolled off. Anne turned, toward the stairs. In the corridor the guards were laughing over something... They stopped when she came by...

...

That vacant hour after lunch. Anne put her feet up, yawned. A strange lieutenant walked in, hunting for the Adjutant. "Reporting from Tours," he said...

"Got plenty of field clerks down there at Toors, Lootenant?" Brock drawled. He tipped his chair back, leaned his head against the grease spot. The Lieutenant sat down. Pleasant air of leisure about this place... Nice girls...

"Field clerks? Sure, Toors is lousy with 'em. Don't try to get a job down there. But why in thunder do you want to leave Paris?"

"Oh, I was just wonderin'," Brock yawned, "if the Kernel should go down without a field clerk, whether he'd be able to get his work done?"

"I'll say he could!" The Lieutenant laughed. "The field clerks are sitting pretty down there. It's the student aviators that are outa luck in that dump! They've had the poor birds diggin' ditches all this winter. Haven't got their commissions yet,– and never seen an airplane. And look at me,– I was fired out of the flying school at home because I was no good in the air, and now I rank 'em." The Lieutenant yawned. "Say, who are those two girls down in the General's office?"

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"That's Rose and Rosalie," Brock said. "Do? Oh, they keep the Home Fires Burnin'– The Vestal Virgins, them two..."

"Have some tea?" said Joan.

"Say, it's a great war!" said the Lieutenant...

...

Dinner. Anne's head ached and her eyes hurt when she turned them. She got up and went to her room, began to undress. Home... God! Home... When you were sick... Tears, stinging... Silly...

...

Morning. Anne's back one long pain. Face burning. Her eyes hurt. You couldn't be sick... You'd got to go on... Get up... Get up... She pulled herself up. "How do you feel?" said Joan.

"Rotten." The room swayed. It went black. Joan pushed her a little and... she was... in bed...

...

Madame de Mourgues came in, all sympathy. There was much influenza, much pneumonia,– she would make come her doctor. "Oh, no," said Anne, "please don't." The hospital at Bordeaux... That smell... Those little, whiskered doctors looking at you... Admiring, sly eyes... Madame brought little glasses, bits of cotton. She put the bits of cotton in the glasses, lit them, slapped the glasses firmly onto Anne's chest. "Ça vous fera du bien!" Madame said...

...

"Go to the Red Cross and get a doctor," Anne said to Joan at noon time. Got to get well... Suppose the Germans came while you were,–

The doctor was young. He had long, skilful fingers. Anne watched them as he knocked her chest. "Bronchial pneumonia," he said. "Bed for a week at least. Got something to read?" The girl was tired, lonely... Too bad...

"'Alice in Wonderland,'"Anne smiled. "That's my one book."

"'The Way of All Flesh' is mine," said the young man, "I'll bring it over."

"I've almost forgotten how to read," said Anne. The young man stood by the bed a minute, looking down.

"Enough over here, isn't it, to just live?" he said...

...

"The Colonel's come back," said Joan next evening.

"And Lettice?"

"Sure. Smiling all over..." The Colonel had sent Anne a book, and a note. He told her not to worry, to take all the time out that she needed. He said they missed her. Anne tossed the note to Joan. A kind man... "Anne,"– Joan sat down on the bed, "I think we're a little evil-minded about Lettice and the Colonel," she said.

"Do you?" said Anne...

...

A lovely afternoon. But Anne felt wobbly. Wondered if she could

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get as far as the river, even... Five days had slipped past. She had slept and slept and almost read 'The Way of All Flesh.' Today the Red Cross doctor had told her to get up, and go out in the sunshine. He didn't know how she felt. Long, long ago Geoffrey had had a stuffed dog that he had used to sleep on. Her mother had taken the stuffing out of it and washed it. Geoffrey had cried when he had discovered it there, all limp and empty. She felt like the cloth dog... Only that Mother had been there, for the dog, to put the stuffing back in... If Mother were only,— Mustn't think of that. Must get well, quickly... There was a war on. She sat down on a bench beside the garden of the Cours la Reine. Couldn't walk one step further... Green grass in tiny strips. A French soldier, sitting on a bench across the garden, with a girl, his arm around her shoulder. Kissing her, long, sticky kisses... The girl, laughing, drawing away... The man, looking at her eyes... The laugh, fading... She, gazing, fascinated... Stealthy fingers of the man's hand undoing a button of the girl's blouse. He slipped his brown hand in. Her head back, lips parted. His face, pressed against them...

'Bah!' said Anne. She got up, walked on. War,— A little boy stood crying beside the parapet under the leaning sycamores. Choking sobs, fists in his two eyes, the small, tattered jacket shaking. A French woman in a long, black veil stopped, bent over, talked to him rapidly in French. He answered, choking. Dirty knuckles crammed into his wet eyes. The woman drew a copper from her purse, gave it to him, patted his shoulder. 'Courage, mon petit!' She walked off, black crêpe floating. The child turned his face toward the wall, wailing. "Qu'est-ce-qu'il y a?" asked Anne. The child looked up. Through the dirt on his cheeks the tears had made pink furrows.

"It is that I am all alone, Madame. It is that my mother is lost and my little sister. Here is already a week since the British soldiers came and told us to leave Noyon. The Boches were coming. In the station at Noyon I lost my mother. I have hunted partout, partout. Eight days I have lived under the bridge there, in a wagon. I have had to eat only half a loaf that a woman gave me." A long, trembling breath. Sobs, choking him. "The Boches must have taken my mother and my sister. Oh..." The dirty knuckles again in his eyes. Anne patted his thin shoulder:

"Come with me," she said. "I will take you to some kind Americans who will help you to find your mother..." She took his hand. They walked together toward the tram line. "You shall have dinner," Anne said. The tear-stained face beside her brightened. The child skipped a little.

"Mademoiselle is very good," he said. "Give me your book, I will carry it for you. I am strong. Ah, Mademoiselle, permit me!" In his small grimy hand he clasped 'The Way of all Flesh'...

...

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"Fermé." The concierge of the American Red Cross was indignant. Did not Mademoiselle know that they closed at five on Saturday? Anne pushed past him through the doorway, dragging the small boy. The concierge stood, looking after her. What rudeness! What hurry! These ridiculous Americans, who waited for no one. But here she came, back again, this strange, rude woman and the dirty gamin, escorted by the Lieutenant Bird of the Croix Rouge. The Lieutenant called an ambulance and told the driver to take this person to the Red Cross Hotel. Puif! The concierge slammed the great door...

...

"Ah! What a beautiful restaurant!" The little boy wriggled on the leather cushion. The Café du Commerce was small and beery. Dust covered its dingy mirrors. "I would like beer, if Mademoiselle would be so kind," the little boy said, breaking bread into the soup that Anne had ordered. "A demi-bock,– or perhaps even a bock." The waitresses gathered round to hear his story. After the demi-bock, smiles flashed across his dark face. He was sure that the Americans would find his mother for him... And if they did not, he would go to America with Mademoiselle, work for her...

"I shall work for you all my life, Mademoiselle," he said to Anne. "But shall I recount to you a petite histoire, Mademoiselle? Would it give you pleasure?" It was the story of Columbus and the egg. "I have told you that one, Mademoiselle," he added, "because it was your country that Columbus has discovered. I should like to see your country some day, but at present," the boy yawned, "j'ai envie de dormir..." The waitress offered him an apple. A brave boy! No? He did not want it? "We have better apples là-bas," the boy said, proudly...

...

Anne hunted for a taxi. She had left him, in his room at the Red Cross Hotel, smiling, sleepy. It had been Anne whose eyes had had tears when they shook hands. Her legs, giving way now... Why? Ah, she had been ill... She had forgotten. Must get somewhere, sit down ... 'Taxi!' The man didn't want to go across the river... Twenty-five francs extra? Go on! Anne sat, limp, in the corner of the taxi. Paris, bounding past, the streets unlighted... The concierge, opening the door: 'Thief!' he was saying to the driver of the taxi. 'Brigand!' The stairs. Could she get up? She grasped the railing, pulling. One more step... One more... One more... Must get away from Paris... Paris, who wound her arms about you, held you, made you laugh, cry ... Madame de Mourgues' door, thank God...

"Ah, Mademoiselle, one was about to notify the police!" Madame de Mourgues jumped up, edging round the dining table toward Anne. Joan thumped her shoulder. "Where the *deuce* have you been?"

"Why," said Anne, "why,–" Joan was easing her to a chair, and

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everything was growing dark around her... 'Tomorrow,' Madame was saying, 'I am going to take her to the country...'

...

Bed. She watched Joan putting clothes into her suit case. Anyway, the little boy was sleeping in a bed, not in a wagon... Paris... War... Too much for you sometimes. A soldier's brown hand, slipping under a girl's blouse... A little boy, telling a petite histoire to Geoffrey's stuffed dog. The apples were better là-bas, the little boy said...

...

The train was crowded. Anne walked as if on air. Her head not attached at all to her body... Madame de Mourgues was giving the porter deux sous. And he was touching his cap, saying, 'A votre service.' Would have spit at you, if you'd given him deux sous... Anne sat down, rested her head against the cushion, closed her eyes. Wonderful to have Madame to tell you where to get out, not have to worry ... At home trains used to have conductors...

...

Morning. Anne stretched herself, and threw her arms above her head across the smooth, white linen. Sunlight lay on the broad sill of the window. Outside, against the sky, sun shining on the new, yellow-green of beech leaves. Nearer the window, the top of a little plum tree, all in blossom. In the tree a bird hopped, twittered. From somewhere came the low call of a cuckoo. The air lived with the scent of flowers. Anne breathed deep. Nothing to do... Wonderful, to lie here, looking at the tall, shining beech trees... She got up, stepped to the window, stood there in the sunlight. There was a flat, square garden, gravelled walks, bordered with pansies, a great well in the middle, with forget-me-nots that grew in the damp places among the worn flags. Out from under the plum tree walked old Jeanne, carrying a jug, her white cap flapping, her black felt slippers shuffling on the gravel. "Bonjour!" said Anne. The old woman looked up. Her smile fitted into a thousand wrinkles in the bronzed cheeks. Mademoiselle found herself better, she hoped, in her deep voice. Mademoiselle had only to wait a moment, and Jeanne would mount with her café-au-lait. And her egg. Mademoiselle was to have an œuf à la coque, each day. The old woman hauled a pail of water from the well and poured it, slopping. Paddled back with it, under the gay, young plum tree...

Anne lay back on her pillows. How long since you'd had an egg for breakfast? A year... A lifetime...

...

She walked into the forest. The light shone, yellow-green through the new beech leaves. It fell in mottled gold on a bright carpet of tender green things, sprouting... Among the new shoots, the firm, grey boles of beeches. Weddings, at home... Why should she think of weddings? There was no place for them in this world. It had been the other world where they had weddings... She stooped down over the

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tender, green leaves. 'A-ah!' Lilies-of-the-valley,– growing, miraculously, in the beech wood. Spreading, reaching out along the floor of the great forest as far as Anne could see. She separated the soft, bright leaves, pulled out the little fronds of bells. The stems made faint squeaks as they came out. The whole air sweet with them. Anne whistled, softly, the march from Lohengrin as she walked on. She crossed a meadow where a brook ran, through rich grass, black, squashy mud. Among the vivid grass grew golden cowslips. Their hollow stems popped when Anne picked them. Forget-me-nots, with pink buds, their feet in the cold brook. Where the forest began again, pale yellow primroses, beyond them daffodils, nodding in the shadows, hyacinths dangling blue bells from their arched stems. The air, filled with the sweetness of black earth, things growing in it.

At home her mother would be kneeling before garden beds, uncovering bulbs and tending them like children... Her father raking damp, soggy leaves from off the shoots of daffodils under the elm tree by the river,– mustn't think about that... Sun, warm between your shoulder blades... Life, growing sweeter, with each breath...

She came to an open space about a giant oak tree. Here, long ago, Mademoiselle Eveline had told her, a king and his courtiers used to meet for hunting parties. She sat, her back against the huge tree.

Paths led in all directions, to the forest. Silence. Twigs snapping. Into the sunlight on an open path, a deer stepped, raising white-edged ears. A rabbit scuttled, bounded, was gone. From somewhere in the mottled greenness, a cuckoo calling. Anne leaned her head back. Quiet. Just to be quiet, quiet... 'One, two, three... One, two, three...' She found herself counting. Why should she count? She sat, head back against the oak trunk, listening. From somewhere, beyond the snapping twigs, the rustling leaves there came a noise. Faint, across an immense distance. Boom... Boom... Boom... Then silence. The forest. A twig snapping, the twitter of a bird. And then again, faint, regular, boom, boom, boom... The War... Of course... She had forgotten. She rose and walked on through the forest. So faint, so far away, that noise, that it was lost in the sound of one's own footsteps. Yet, when you stopped,– one, two, three... And then a pause... And then again, one, two, three... Man, killing his race off... Rabbits, scuttling through the bushes, cuckoos calling. Spring, unfolding new leaves... Would man one day, leave this green world to scuttling rabbits? He, whose intelligence had killed his race off...

Mademoiselle Eveline was sitting in the garden. There was a table, with a blue checked cover, a bottle of wine, bread. Old Jeanne came under the plum tree carrying two steaming bowls of potage. Anne hurried. Hungry... Months since you'd felt ravenously hungry...

...

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Up from the town there sloped a pasture. Sun lay on munched grass and golden clumps of broomplant. Anne clambered up there the next morning. She lay on her face along the turf, feeling the sun, warm... Hours, slipping... "Mademoiselle!" Someone was calling. Jeanne's voice... Anne sat up. The old woman stood below her in the pasture. "Voici un télégramme." The old woman held up a small, blue envelope. Anne sat there, gazing. Heart, pounding at her ribs, in her throat... Geoffrey... She must get up... Must go and take the thing and read it... She had known all along that this would happen... She got up. Her body, heavy... You could hardly raise your hand...

Her name, in scrawly, French handwriting. Flaps that one tore away. A blue paper, with black lines, that one unfolded. Fingers that trembled. 'Geoffrey est au repos,' went the ink tracks, God! He was safe then. Life could go on a little... 'Peux peut-être vous voir cette semaine. Je peux vous dire où. Joan.' "Votre frère, Mademoiselle?" The old woman stood, leaning forward, eager...

"He is at rest for a few days," Anne said. "I must take the train this afternoon..."

"Mademoiselle is not entirely re-made, unhappily." Jeanne trudged behind Anne down the path the cows made.

"Oh, I am all right," Anne said, "I am as re-made as one can be in war..."

...

Mademoiselle Eveline sat in her wheel chair by the window, watching. Would Jeanne never come, then? Would she never find her? That telegram,– had the time come that the axe of war should fall on these gay, young people from America? Ah! There was Mademoiselle Wentworth swinging down the road, ahead of Jeanne, wind tossing her brown hair. Mademoiselle Eveline leaned forward, her dark eyes searching. Ah, Grâce à Dieu, it had not come to her, that sadness, that desperation of a hope, lost... The young girl smiled... She must go this afternoon? Ah, Mademoiselle Eveline was sorry! Must go to try to see her brother? Mademoiselle Eveline understood! She would send Jeanne for a carriage... It was unfortunate that Mademoiselle could not stay until she was entirely re-put, but enfin, this was war...

...

"Geoffrey's somewhere out near Compiègne," Joan said. "A girl from the Jones College Unit came into the office, hunting for you. Said she'd seen Geoffrey. He'd asked her to tell you that if you could get to Compiègne,–"

"How in the world d'you suppose I'll get to Compiègne?" Anne said.

"That girl was driving a supply truck," Joan said, "but she had to go back. Anyway, I doubt if she could have taken you without some kind of pass or something. Why don't you try asking Lind to write

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out something and try to get the A.P.M. to stamp it? Then perhaps you could go by train." Anne took her hat off. "Gosh," she said. "I'll have to get there, somehow."

...

Evening. Before the ticket window at the Gare Saint-Lazare a long line of officers and soldiers stood, waiting. Next the window, at the line's head, a French gendarme in a blue cape, a sword, was looking at their orders. Among the officers and soldiers, Anne stood, in her Red Cross uniform, its grey cape. Step by step, moving forward. Would she get by? Would they sell her a ticket? Have to... Have to... If they knew how much she wanted to see Geoffrey... Or arrest her as a spy? War. 'Hard to move toward the front,' the Adjutant had said. But he'd signed the pass she'd written. Had, winking, sent it to the Provost Marshal, with the day's orders, and it had come back, stamped, among the orders. 'Can't swear it'll get you anywhere, but smile your prettiest,' the Adjutant had said, 'and see what happens...' There was a woman in the ticket window. No use to smile at women... Great gendarme who examined people's passes... His black moustache moving. Handing hers through the window...

"Un billet de Première pour Compiègne." Anne tried to make her voice firm. Great God, she'd got to,– "Infirmière?" the woman in the window asked her. "Militaire," Anne said to the gendarme, who was leaning forward, looking through the window at her orders. The woman jabbered French. "No compris," Anne said. 'C'est le cachet Américain,' the woman was saying, 'but the infirmières of the American Army dress habitually in blue...' The big gendarme turned, looked at Anne in the dim light. 'Her uniform, is it not blue?' he said. 'Her cape ought to be lined with scarlet,' shouted the woman. 'I have seen them often, these infirmières. They pass through here and they are always in blue and scarlet.' Anne turned, desperate, toward the station. So after all, she,– There was an American captain, standing. He might help her... She beckoned to him.

"Perhaps you'll help me to get a ticket to Compiègne,–" she said. The American came forward, smiling, looked through the ticket window. "Hurry up!" he said. "Oon. Millitare. Compiègne." From behind Anne a French officer reached forward, tapping the shelf. Did the ticket-seller not know that there was a tail of one kilometre of length, he demanded? Was she trying to make them wait thus outside all night, to miss their train? Sacred name of a dog, it was not they who wanted to return to the front! But it waited to be known that which the General Gouraud would think... 'Allez-y. Donnez-lui son billet!' roared the gendarme. The woman stamped a ticket, shoved it and the papers to Anne, talking in French... Alors, if the woman were a spy, why they could...

"Thank God," said Anne.

...

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Anne stood in a street in the grey dawn. The building across the way had windows, and beyond the windows, nothing. The sky showed through them. An American captain, who had sat opposite her in the train last night, was saying good-bye. His beard had sprouted. The mild man of last night looked rough, unkempt now. "Got to go to the Provost Guard or somebody and find out where my outfit's at," he said. "You'll make out all right?" He took his cap off, held his hand out.

"Oh, yes." Anne watched the rain fall in the narrow street as he walked off. A company of French soldiers marched past, rain dripping from their helmets. Draggled blue coats, packs with dangling boots and shovels, little brown bags with bottles of red wine, guns that seemed too long for the small men, sharp bayonets pointing up into the dark rain. Little men, who leaned forward, trudging with short steps. As if they had walked this way for a lifetime... Could walk on this way, till Death should stop them... An American truck came, banging. Three boys in flat, steel helmets on its front seat. The helmets cocked forward, sideways, over smooth-shaven, lean, tanned faces, with high cheek bones. They waved at Anne, grinning. 'Hello, America!' they shouted. The truck snorted, rattled. 'Hello!' she called back. They went on, jouncing, laughing. Americans... How different... How young... Like children, they looked...

An old man was banging up iron shutters before the Hôtel de La Cloche. Could Anne get coffee? Ah, that the old man could not say. He thought not. Did he know where the American canteen was? Ah, that he did not know. There were two American ladies in a room overhead, he said, the window with blinds open. These Americans slept with their blinds open, and when they woke they shut the windows! What customs! Could Mademoiselle wash? Ah, the rooms were filled with militaires, the old man said. But he would get her a bowl of water. She could wash in the corridor here, if she liked. Anne washed, in a dark corner of the corridor, combed her hair, and put on a clean collar. Beyond the doorway to the street, she heard feet marching...

...

"Oh yes. You're Lieutenant Wentworth's sister. Come in." An American girl opened the door of the small hotel room. She introduced her friend. The friend was trying to find clothes on the floor, the table. The room was dirty. One of the windows broken. A great hole in the wall across the way. Yet these girls seemed at home here... "I tried to find you in Paris," said the first one. "The First Division's out near Montdidier. Your brother was in one evening. I wonder if he'll be able to come in again,– It's quite a long way." The door opened. A slim figure in a grey-green whipcord uniform bounded through it.

"Listen, girls, can you let me have any chocolate? Why Anne!

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Where did you drop from?" Evelyn Tollet seized Anne's hand and shook it. "You must go out with me on the supply truck," she said. "*Won't* Geoffrey be surprised?"

...

The truck snorted through a street that ran between piles of débris, houses without roofs. The whole world seemed, somehow, without a roof here... Soldiers stood on sidewalks, in doorways of battered buildings, grinning, waving. Soldiers walked down the street, mess kits in their hands, helmets tilted. "This is our burg," said Evelyn Tollet, on the seat next Anne, "and that's my Y." She pointed proudly at a building of one story, with a red triangle hung outside it. The truck stopped. "Take this box in for me, Holmes?" she said... Soldiers crowded round her, talking, helping...

"We'll go down to the mess and get our dinner." Anne and Evelyn walked through a street, deep with mud,– between the ruined houses. Desolation. Yet Evelyn seemed to feel perfectly at home here... Anne stopped. A man coming toward her,– man in a soldier's uniform, rough and unpressed. Muddy wrapped puttees. Muddy army boots. Helmet, tilted forward,– Geoffrey... His face, thin... Geoffrey, older ... But his eyes, as they met hers, just the same... Just the same... "Hello, Andy!" he said.

"Hello, Geoff." He stooped and kissed her, taking off his helmet. He stood there, smiling at her with it in his hand. "You don't wear Sam Browne belts and all that?" Anne said. His hair curling off his forehead... Her mother's fingers, stroking that forehead gently, as it lay against her knee when she read to him...

"Got to go and inspect the chow line," he was saying. "Take her up to the mess, Evelyn. I'll see you later..." Anne watched him as he walked off. Soldiers, saluting Geoffrey... Uniforms, then, didn't make any difference...

...

"How damned easily we lived in the old days, Anne!" Geoffrey sat beside her on a pile of crates outside the village. They had been reading letters. Their mother's, Josiah's...

"Yes," Anne said. Sitting beside Geoffrey, as if nothing had ever happened. And yet, their uniforms,– why couldn't life have gone on, the way it started?

"We weren't well off," said Geoffrey, "but we had everything we wanted,– comfortable beds, bathtubs, good food. Books, open fires, and Mother always there to make tea for you."

"And cream," said Anne.

"Dry shoes and stockings. 'Member the way you and Randolph used to think that war'd be sport, Anne? It's a bore when you're back in a place like this, and God, it's a horrid business when you're in it! You just have to make yourself go through with it when the time comes. They say we're going back in right off. Going to try this

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'open warfare' stuff that we've been learning. It's no fun, Anne, trying to kill poor cusses that don't like it any more than you do. Foolishness!" Geoffrey jumped down from the boxes, "Well, we've got to see the thing through."

"But the idea is not foolishness," said Anne. "To make the world safe from any more wars. That's worth it!"

"Yes, the idea's worth it," said Geoffrey, "I try to keep remembering that. But it don't do you a whole lot of good when you're out in the mud. All you can do is stop thinking, and keep going. Tell me about Randolph..." Anne told him. "H'mp," said Geoffrey. He stood, looking straight ahead, at a green field. A bugle sounded.

"I've got to go and take retreat," said Geoffrey...

...

A stiff, military back, standing in the street before the soldiers, saluting, whirling. Standing, his hand up to his helmet. That wasn't Geoffrey... Geoffrey was a simple, quiet person... This man was serious, stiff, military... "The men simply adore him," whispered Evelyn Tollet, standing beside Anne, watching. "They'd do anything in the world for Geoffrey..." Anne blinked, felt for the handkerchief in her skirt pocket...

...

That evening Geoffrey put Anne and Evelyn on a truck for Compiègne. He'd see them tomorrow, he said. He'd try to get his friend Campbell, and they'd all go to a restaurant and have a party. He reached up, shaking hands, rain trickling from his helmet. The truck growled, lurched forward. Geoffrey, standing in the narrow, muddy street, and smiling. "See you tomorrow!" he called.

"He's a prince, that guy!" said the driver...

...

They were to meet at the Jones College canteen. Anne waited, watching two girls hand out mugs of cocoa to a line of soldiers. Around the strange, dilapidated room soldiers, sitting at tables, eating crackers, drinking cocoa, smoking. Soldiers, shy, embarrassed, staring at you. 'Say, but it's nice to see a,—' One of the girls came toward Anne, holding a note out. "A motor-cycle driver brought it," she said. Geoffrey's writing... 'I can't make it, today, Anne,' he said, 'we're shoving off for somewhere. We'll have to have that party next fall when we get home...' Anne walked out of the canteen. The street... Rain... Houses, with empty windows... Empty windows...

...

Night. The train stood, somewhere, on a siding. It had been standing hours. Anne rubbed the fog off the window, peered out. Flat-cars, loaded with artillery, were bumping past them. Guns, painted with weird splotches of color. Box-cars with American soldiers in the doorways. Jiggling northward, into rainy darkness...

...

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Morning, at last. Rain, dripping onto sidings. Beyond the sidings, buildings. The smutty train shed of the station. Paris... Three weeks since the night she'd left that train shed... No, only three days... Must go and take the Métro to the office...

...

"What's the matter with Lettice, anyway?" Joan Porter came in from setting a bunch of flowers on the Colonel's desk that morning. "She's sitting in there with her handkerchief all squashed up, sniffing."

"Her temper isn't too good early in the morning," Brock said. "I asked her a question yesterday, and I got snapped at good and proper. I don't think she feels good."

"Worrying about her young man, I suppose," Joan sticking daffodils in a brown jug. "He's up at Armentières now."

"Oh, yes. Her young man," Anne said, "I forgot him..."

...

A stir. Another General was coming down from Chaumont. Would Anne move down into his office? The Adjutant, asking... He'd be here three days a week, he'd want help,— Anne followed the Adjutant downstairs. It was a large room, with big windows facing the sun. A Major in the corner, stout and genial. Anne was established at a large, double desk. Across it sat a young man. 'Meet Lieutenant Caldwell...'

"What do you do?" Anne looked across the double desk at the Lieutenant.

"Nothing." A pair of quizzical, blue eyes that met hers... "In the morning, sit with my feet on the bottom drawer. In the afternoon, I put 'em on the top one." He lit a cigarette. "If they ever do give me a job," he said, "I won't know how to do it. It's been so long now." He looked at Anne. You needn't pretend with this girl...

"It's a great war," the girl said.

...

Days slipped by. Anne sat across the broad desk from Barry Caldwell. When Anne worked, which was not often, Barry Caldwell watched her, nervous, jealous. Outside the broad, open window the horse-chestnut trees blossomed, and dropped their flowers on the sidewalk.

...

The end of May. Spring, melting into summer. A morning so warm that Anne had left her rubber-coat behind her. The world, smiling,— But the face of the woman in the kiosk, like a thunder cloud, dark: "Mauvaises nouvelles ce matin!" Anne's heart, thumping... "Voilà les Boches qui reviennent..." The faces on the bridge that morning all looked sombre. The Boches, who came again... The Boches, who came...

...

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The office. The Major, sitting very straight up in his corner. Anne sat down, opposite to Barry Caldwell. Those keen eyes,– He stood up. The Major stood up. Anne stood up. A quiet, elderly man was walking through the room, opening the door of the inner office, closing it behind him. 'The General.' 'Gosh.' They sat down. A sleek young aide, carrying a brief case, went in. The Major went in. The aide came out again, and wandered, standing, looking out the window... Barry Caldwell stood up, offering a cigarette to the Lieutenant. "See anything of the Germans on your way down?"

"They're on the Marne, at Dormans." The aide held a match out. "We ran right into the lines on our way down. Lot of Marines going in up there, and a lot of French coming out. They say the Germans have got as far as Château-Thierry."

"How far is that?" Anne asked.

"Oh, about thirty-five miles, as far as from New York to Morristown, Boston to Worcester,– any city from one of its outlying suburbs. Took us about two hours to come in from Dormans, held up by trucks, too." The General opened his door, strode out. The young man, spryly, followed. 'Going to Tours.' Anne and Barry Caldwell and the Major looked at one another. Anne turned back to her typewriter.

"Gosh," she said; "gosh."

...

Déjeuner at Madame de Mourgues' was sombre. The Commandant's face, grave, the bags under his eyes more baggy. Anne watched him. Serious... Agitated... And yet, he did not droop the way he had drooped last March... Did not rest his forehead motionless in his thin hand. Gobbled his soup tonight the way he always gobbled. 'And Paris? Is it that they will arrive this time?' The Marquise next him, asking.

"The Americans,– this time it turns on them!" The Commandant rubbed a bit of bread around his soup plate. "I do not know. They lack experience. But they are young and, one says, very brave. Mais enfin, je ne sais pas!" The old Commandant's hands went up in a quick gesture. "Nous verrons!" he said. "Nous verrons!" [1]

The door opened. Mademoiselle Duffot rushed in, face flushed, her blue coif fluttering round her square shoulders,– But Mademoiselle Duffot was at the front,– Madame had read out loud a letter from her only last night,– Mademoiselle Duffot talking, talking, fluttering her cape. Madame de Mourgues rising, going to meet her with both hands out. 'Ma chère Cousine...' Mademoiselle Duffot's talk went right on. The infirmières had been in the act of caring for their sick ones, quite quietly, only last evening... Gasp, gasp... Swallow... Everything was tranquil, everything calm... Then, this morning, quite suddenly, came the infantry, and told them they must go... Gasp

[1] 'We shall see. We shall see.'

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... Swallow... Go, and leave their patients, said that their patients would be brought after them, told them not to wait a moment, but to leave quickly. And they had had just the time to throw their capes across their shoulders, to precipitate themselves into an ambulance,– Mademoiselle swallowed hard, blinked her yellow eyes. These infirmières had precipitated themselves into the ambulance, the ambulance had started,– and in the interior, oh, how one was jounced! Oh, la! la! And tout à coup, they have perceived that they are passing the Porte de la Villette. And here they are in Paris, at the hour of déjeuner! "Ah,"– tears popping down the flushed cheeks,– "à quelles fins allons-nous? Ah, mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!"

Madame de Mourgues patted her, quieted her, gave her luncheon. Outside, in the green courtyard, the sun shone. Sun poured through the long, open window of Anne's room. Anne sat, in its delicious warmness, puffing her cigarette in silence. Below, in the gravel walk, pigeons turned circles, courting one another...

...

An elderly American lady, with a kind face, sat at the dinner table that evening. Anne stopped, gazed at her. New England... All your aunts... All your cousins... "A lady authoress," said Mr. Colt, in Anne's ear. "Very famous." They sat down. Across the table, Madame de Mourgues presented Anne to the small woman with the famous name. 'Josiah Wentworth's daughter?' the lady authoress was saying, 'why I went to school with Anna and Josiah...' She had been motoring round the Zone of Advance, she told them, collecting material for stories for the magazines. Then, suddenly, the young officer who conducted her, had thought it wiser for her to return to Paris. She was disappointed, as she wasn't quite through. The wonderful courage of those boys... Mr. Colt caught Anne's eye, and smiled. The dinner went on...

...

"I wonder if she can understand War," Anne said. She and Joan sat in the open window of their room, smoking, and watching the gold light fade behind the Eiffel Tower.

"She's written wonderful books" said Joan, "she understands Life."

"Yes, but I have an idea you have to live a war to understand it. She's too old to live this war, like we do,–"

"Hush," said Joan, "she sleeps in the next room."

...

The soft, summer darkness fading. The z-z-z-t, z-z-z-t of the wireless on the Eiffel Tower, talking through space. Night...

...

A great scream, a giant whistle cutting sleep. Anne jerked her head up, every muscle tightened. A bomb, that screamed louder, louder as it came down. Coming, at you... So, they had hit you, this time... Whole, damned thing, over,– The windows rattled, bed shook, in the

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great roar. Glass clattered in the courtyard,– Silence. Anne's muscles loosened. So, you were still here...

"Funny how you have time to think while you're listening to it coming," said Joan. 'Il faut descendre, Mesdemoiselles!' Clémentine's voice. People, scuttling in the hall, pounding at doors. "Let's not get up," said Joan. "I never worked so hard as I did today. Lettice got sick this morning,– had to go home,–" 'Faut descendre, Madame!' Clémentine, next door. Syrens, screaming, dismal. Sad voice of the lady authoress in the next room explaining something to Clémentine in English. She would not go down. Clémentine urging her in French to descend. The faint ker-bung, ker-bung of anti-aircraft. Shrapnel, pattering on the gravel outside. Sleepy... Geoffrey out there, somewhere, where the shrapnel,– It had lasted too long, this,– The lady authoress next door was sobbing... You could hear it through the closed door between the two rooms. Too old to come to war... No one should be allowed at wars who's over forty... Couldn't stand it... Old people got you into wars, but when it came to fighting,– "That poor old lady makes me nervous," Joan said.

The berloque sounded in the street below. Ding, dong. Ding, dong. Supposed to be safe now, till the next time. The lady authoress in the darkness, sobbing... Sobbing... Anne turned over, her face toward the wall. How the poor wall had trembled when that bomb hit... Nothing permanent in this world... Nothing solid... Wide awake, now. Damn ... Damn...

...

"This one," Barry Caldwell looked at his wrist watch across the desk from Anne, and listened. There was the sharp explosion of a shell from the long-range gun. "This one goes off on the even twenties. The other goes off at the ten-minute interval between them. The other one won't hit us. It's too far off, but this one,–" Anne went on working. It would give Barry Caldwell something to do, to time shells...

...

Barry Caldwell came in from his lunch, hung his cap up, walked up and down, up and down. The window, the door, the Major's desk, Anne's desk, back again, off again. Anne stopped writing. She couldn't read her shorthand. How could you, with a madman,–

"The thing hit two Canadian soldiers on the Avenue George Five, – just before I came along from my luncheon," said Barry Caldwell. "One of them was,– just a mess left on the pavement. They were putting the other into an ambulance. He kept saying over and over that this was the first time he'd been on leave in three years. French doctor called me over to translate it,– thought the man might be saying something useful about his symptoms." He opened the door, stepped out onto the balcony. Anne got up, stepped out next him. Sorry she'd been cross,– "Oughtn't to have bothered you with that,"

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said Barry Caldwell. "Had to tell someone..." They stood, leaning against the stone balustrade, silent, in the sunshine. Below them, in the street, the Colonel's car was stopping. The Colonel, jumping out, hurrying toward the doorway. 'Call out the guard...' Lettice drifting up the sidewalk, from the corner. Smiling at the guard as she turned in. "Pretty girl," said Barry Caldwell.

"Too pretty," Anne said. He looked at her. So, she knew... He moved, the fraction of a small space, nearer. This girl,– God! If you didn't get orders to go somewhere soon, you'd,– You went to war, and found yourself compelled to sit, day by day, doing nothing, opposite a girl... A girl like this, too... There were plenty of the others,– Easy... But one, like this,– Anne moved toward the door. A feeling,– If this man didn't get orders to go somewhere soon now,– Another shell exploded, somewhere quite close. She turned, and went in...

...

"May thirtieth!" Barry Caldwell stretched his arms, yawning, the next morning. "Memorial Day at home. 'The best way that each one of us can celebrate this great day,'– this the Colonel's Order,– 'is by each one remaining at his post.'" He leaned over, pulled out the bottom drawer of his desk, put his feet up, spurs scratching the mahogany. "My post!" he said.

"There's a service that I'd sort of like to go to at the American Church this morning," Anne said. Anything better than this doing nothing since the General had left... And this man, opposite... His eyes,– beginning to make her restless... "But I, too, have a post." She pulled her drawer out. The Major at his desk in the corner, turned the 'Paris Herald.' "My brother and I used to stand by the road on May thirtieth," said Anne, "and watch the soldiers go past to the cemetery in old hacks. We thought 'soldier' meant an old, old man with a white beard. We never were quite sure whether they weren't going there to get buried themselves,–"

"Whereas they," said Barry Caldwell, "when they got on their blue broadcloth long coats, felt themselves gloriously young. 'The brave old days!' Hell! We'll all be 'veterans' when we get home."

"Miss Wentworth!" The Major laid down his 'Herald,' clearing his throat, coughing, writing something on a piece of paper. "Ahem! Important errand for you!" 'Go ahead and take the morning off!' he wrote. He handed her the paper...

...

Flags against the white walls of a church. America and France, England and Italy, China,– others, patterns of bright silk hanging there, together... People's backs in rows... Uniforms... Military shoulders, heads above the shoulders bent in prayer. Anne sat down, erect. Puritans did not kneel down in churches... An organ, playing "Onward, Christian Soldiers." Silly song... How could one be Chris-

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tian and be a soldier? Prayer... Major Salmon, across the aisle there, kneeling... Same knees where the cocottes had sat at the Casino... The Major's barish forehead against the pew in front, his eyes closed. Joan, kneeling, two seats ahead there, her face buried. Thinking of Monks, no doubt... Colt, of the Intelligence Service, kneeling beside his Chief... Man who had lost the papers the French had given him in a disorderly house the first night,– Try to think of the Service. '.... O, Father, we pray thee that the wives, so far away from these brave men fighting on the fields of France, may remain true to them while they are absent.' Anne turned her head. True to them... God...

A woman rustled into the pew behind, whispering to the woman next her: "Been making beds, out at the Hospital. They're expecting an enormous trainload of American wounded. Haven't got room – the place is full already. Yes, they want everyone to come and help, they..." The service went on. Anne tried to listen. American wounded ... Geoffrey... Where was he? Some dumb-bell up there talking to someone he called 'Father'... Let him talk... It comforted that little man and all these other people to think there was a 'Father'... Made them feel better to think that wholesale slaughter was organized by God... Beds to make... She'd go there on her half day off tomorrow... Might help... Taps, echoing through stone arches. That, at last, was real... Those clear notes... Trailing... Trailing... As they had trailed, each night... before one put the light out...

...

Lunch. The lady authoress had sent Clémentine to find Anne. Madame desired to speak to Mademoiselle Ventvort toute'suite. The lady authoress's room was in disorder. Her trunk stood open. Flannel nightgowns, knit under-drawers, rubbers, black waists, sleeve shields, 'corset covers,'– "My dear child!" The authoress turned from the disorder, laying two trembling hands down on Anne's shoulders. Anne drew a quick breath. Josiah had died and they had chosen this woman who'd been his friend to tell her,– "I'm leaving Paris this afternoon," she was saying. "I have it on the best authority that it is very dangerous to stay in Paris. An American major told me this morning that it is likely that the Germans will be here within forty-eight hours. It will go extremely hard, he said, with any American woman who may be left here. I want you to come to Brest with me."

"But I can't. I have my job."

"I'm asking you this on account of your family,"– tears in the lady authoress's eyes,– "I wouldn't dare to face them when I got back unless I had done my best to persuade you,–"

"You've done your best," said Anne. She held her hand out. "Goodbye." Hungry... Getting late for lunch... The poor old lady,– much better for her to get out... Better if she hadn't come in the beginning... Why did they send old ladies to write about wars?

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"I shall tell your family," said the lady authoress, "that you are a brave girl." The girl stopped, in the doorway.

"For Heaven's sake," she said, "don't tell them that! Please!"

...

Hot. The smell of dusty pavements. A truck, dust-covered, stood before the door when Anne got home that evening. A man was climbing to its front seat. Dust covered his face, whitened the hair that straggled from under his overseas cap. With a loud yell, he leaped down from the seat and ran toward Anne. From under dust-covered eyebrows Jerry Suydam's bright eyes peered out. "Just got here from Château-Thierry!" Jerry squeezed her hand, pumped it up and down. Glad to see her... Anne... Anne... Wonderful... Jerry beamed. "I'm going to the warehouse to fill this truck," he said, "and then you're coming to dinner with me before I go back up. Be back in half an hour." He rode off, grinning, waving.

Hot. Anne bathed, changed into a dress of cool green linen, a deep-brimmed, plain, brown hat that she had bought in Paris. Powder... She leaned toward the glass. Nice to look cool... And that faint smell of iris,– Clémentine, knocking: 'Un jeune homme qui attend.'

"Why,–" Jerry gave her his hand to help her to the truck seat. Why, Anne was lovely... Looking so cool and clean... And that faint whiff of,– something,– After men's sweaty bodies... God... Jerry climbed up, next her. Peered at her through his heavy glasses as he drove. Her hair smooth, with a golden shine in front of her ear... Distant, under the shadow of that deep hat... 'Look out, Jerry!' Her hand, gripping his arm... 'Gosh, you almost hit that taxi!' Anne said. "A colonel in it, too!" They both laughed. There was Joan, waving from the sidewalk. The truck's brakes screamed. "Hey, there!"

An old Frenchman, on a tin chair on the Champs-Elysées turned to watch Joan climb up. A military camion, par exemple! On it a soldier, all white with dust, from the front, sans doute... Beside him, a jolie femme en civil... Picking up another... All three laughing... Laughing, with the Germans just outside the gates of Paris... Pas sérieux, ces Américains! Pas du tout sérieux! The great truck snorted, moved on.

"I've got to be back at the front by ten-thirty," said Jerry. "Where shall we eat?"

...

"Where are the Germans now?" Anne asked across the table at the 'Chinese Umbrella.'

"All I know is, we were playing baseball in Soissons Sunday afternoon, and Tuesday, the Germans were there. Today's what, Friday? They're certainly coming fast now." A woman in a black satin Mandarin coat set down their dinner. "I brought down eight gassed soldiers from Château-Thierry," said Jerry. "Dropped 'em at the hospital at Meaux. Coughing their insides out. Eyes all running. Ugh! A

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year ago, Anne I'd a' had to talk to 'em about God. Fat chance they'd believe in a God that can let his minions use gas! No more bunk now,— Life's too short these days. What they want's a doctor. All I can do, and I know it, is just to try to get the boys cigarettes and chocolate. A cigarette'll do a man more good than any amount of bunkum." He pulled out his pass and laid it on the table. Unscrewed his pen, scrawled a signature along the blank line. "Signature of the French Provost Marshal," he said. "If I waited for him to sign it, I'd be here three days. The boys are going to get this stuff 'fore morning."

Joan paid the waitress. No one else had money. "Lucky we met her," Anne said. They all laughed as they stepped out to the sidewalk. Huge, in the hot, narrow street, the truck stood. A French woman, sitting in the open window of the entresol opposite, smiled, with sad eyes. Young people, who filled her narrow street so suddenly with laughter... Without any doubt this soldier was a wit... An awkward man... Yet, suddenly he bent and kissed the hand of the tall girl in green... A gallant man! She watched him climb up, jerk the gears. Watched the two girls, standing, laughing, waving to him, till the great, dusty truck swung round the corner...

The girls stood looking down the empty street. Their laughter was gone. Quite suddenly the narrow street was silent. "Where goes your friend?" The girls looked up. A French woman, in a black dress...

"Au front," they said... They turned, and walked off, slowly...

...

They leaned against the parapet by the river gazing out between the drooping branches. Dusk, falling. Loud, from the north there came the boom of great guns. 'Listen! It's never been so close.' Joan touched Anne's arm. They stood there, gazing at the arches of the Pont-Neuf.

An old woman, weird in the finery of a by-gone day, shuffled toward them from the speckly shadows, her shaky head wobbling the bizarre feathers on her big hat. Muttering... Les canons! Nothing to her... In '70 they were more near yet... Ah, she had had success during the last war! Un succès fou! Les canons... De plus en plus fort... Ah, that war of '70! What misery, now, to grow old, sans le sou, to die of hunger... Qu'est-ce-qu'elle voit? Deux femmes qui font le trottoir... 'Vous avez choisi un mauvais coin, mes belles!' She laughed. She waved her hand toward Anne and Joan. 'C'est sur les boulevards qu'il vous faut aller!' But they did not see her... Nobody saw her...

...

"It would be almost better to be out there, where you knew what was happening," said Joan. The two girls walked on, through the mottled shadows.

"I wonder if anyone really does know?" Anne said...

...

Getting undressed. Brushing your teeth. Going to bed. The Ger-

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mans, outside the gates of Paris, coming... And still you went to bed and got up... Went to bed, and got up...

...

The American Hospital was a large, brick building, standing back from the street. Before it, ambulances were drawn up in a square of gravel. It was a hot Saturday afternoon, and the French people, making for the Bois, had paused in groups to look through the iron grilling of the fence at something inside. Anne slipped down from her bicycle and pushed it, slowly, among the crowd of people. The ride out from Paris had made her hot, in spite of her white dress. The Red Cross coif that Mademoiselle Duffot had lent her, stuck to her brow. 'Tiens! Laissez passer l'infirmière.' The French people pulled their children aside to let her go through. Things, lying on the gravel of the courtyard... Things packed so closely that, Anne thought, she couldn't make her way among them. The things were stretchers,— stretchers with men on them... Men lying there, on the ground, packed close together... American men,— boys like Geoffrey and like Randolph... Like all the others you had known in childhood... Lying, and talking odd, homely talk to one another... Laughing, joking... Some of them lying very still, their eyes shut... The speckled sunlight falling through the trees, touching their faces...

In the corridor of the hospital, stretchers lay along the floor by the wall, one man's feet against the next man's head. As far as one could see. Anne stood, in the open doorway, looking. So it had hit America? They were one's own, these... The smell of ether met you in the doorway, choked you. The corridor, hot... Sun, beating on the faces of the men, who lay on stretchers... "Say, nurse!" A boy with a tanned face, smiling there, below her. Why, it was you, Anne, that he was saying 'nurse' to... "Push in my elbow, will yer?" he was asking. "Everyone's kickin' it as they go past." Anne stooped over and pushed his arm. He winced a little...

A boy sat up in bed on the stair landing, talking to everyone who came past. "Hello," cheerfully, to Anne. "Where were you wounded?" she asked. "In the knee," he said, "bayonet stuck me..." "But at what place?" "Oh," he said, "I dunno. One o' those places out there by the river. This mornin', it was. Come in here on a truck,— with all them fellers groanin'. Say, where am I now? *I* don't know."

"And what did you do to the person who stuck the bayonet into your knee?" The boy looked up at Anne, his bright eyes shining. Very young in his white, hospital shirt,— a little boy, whose mother had put him to bed, but could not make him lie down... "Stuck mine into him," the child was saying, "'n' say, I had to stand on him to get the bloomin' thing out. Say nurse," eagerly, "d'you think I'll get back to my outfit? Hate to think o' the boys goin' on 'thout me?"

"Is it such fun, then?"

"Fun? Aw, say, nurse, you girls ought to git a chanst to come up

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there 'n' see us boys go over! We climb out, 'n' run. And if you don't climb out,– say, a guy in our outfit he tried to stay behind this mornin'. The Cap'n he says to him 'Are you gettin' outa this here trench, God da,–'" The boy stopped, crimson mounting his cheeks...

"Yes?" said Anne. "What happened?"

"The Cap'n, he give him a minute, 'n' the guy stood there. 'N' then the Cap'n shot him." Anne stepped past, into the upper corridor. Beds lined the wall. People in white walked among them, bending over. Through the high windows, hot summer sun poured down. A smell of ether and of disinfectants...

A man sat up in bed, gazing intently at something he was holding. As though he had had a pet in his lap there, that was amusing... Anne could not see his lap till she came near. The man held a basin. In it,– Anne stopped. That was a wrist, an arm that ended in red flesh and bits of bone, an end of something whitish, dangling downward... Blood, in the water... Black sickness, coming before one's eyes... One's hand, groping, holding a bedstead... One must not faint... Had come here to help, to be useful... Must help... The man himself was watching it with a dazed, faintly amused smile. By the next bed a nurse stood doing something. Anne would ask her... "I came," Anne talked to the nurse's back. Same familiar uniform that nurses had worn at a hospital where Anne had lived once... "I came,–" The nurse turned round:

"Hold this!" Part of an arm. Like meat that Anne had seen in markets somewhere... It was lying on a board, and the nurse was putting little pads against it, soaked in something. Green, sickness... Blackness, falling before your eyes... "Hold this!" The nurse spoke sharply, wiggling a finger of her left hand. Anne held the pad under the moving finger. Black sickness coming, going, like a great cloud... Must watch the nurse, winding the bandage... If one let go, everything would be spoiled... The nurse was cool and skilful... "There," she was saying quietly, while she rolled. "That'll keep it till the doctor comes round. That's all right. Thank you very much," she said to Anne.

"Is there something else I might do? I–"

"Yes." The nurse beckoned. No time to listen to explanations... "The beds in this tent," Anne followed her through a door to where a great tent had been put up on the roof. The summer heat beat mercilessly on the canvas, turning the place light yellow. Furious heat... Men in uniforms lying on mattresses on iron cots here... "You see, they've put these men in here, and we haven't had time to make up the beds. You might just make these beds," the nurse was saying... She turned from Anne to a passing orderly. "I think I'd take that man in the corner next. He seems to be suffering a good deal," she said. The nurse saw everything, it seemed, and still was calm, efficient, never losing her head... It was in action that one should see nurses... But she was gone...

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Beds. No sheets. One got them from some sort of housekeeper or something... There were eighteen beds. Did she know how to make beds with people lying on them, the matron asked? 'No, not at all.' You rolled the sheet, like this, and then you put it under his shoulders, so, and then you lifted, shoved it down, lifted the legs, smoothed it. 'Begin at the head.' The pile of sheets was heavy...

A huge man lay on a small bed, sunburned, healthy looking. The blouse of his uniform was buttoned about him, one arm and shoulder all bound up inside. He smiled up at Anne, a broad smile, gleaming white teeth... "I'm going to make your bed." Must talk as if one knew how, as if one had made beds all one's life with men lying on them... "Can't get up, Lady. Got a bad shoulder, and somethin' took me in the laig." "That's all right," said Anne. "I fix the sheet like this. Now, you put your other hand round my neck, like this, and while I lift, you pull." The strength of a young bullock pulled her downward. Her back, cracking under pressure of the man's taut muscles. But the sheet was down now, as far as his waist. His legs she must lift herself, white sausages, rolled up against a board. Queer satisfaction in having got the sheet there, in smoothing it out and tucking it in firmly... Easy to put the other one across the top now... "That's great," the man said. He let his head drop back on the clean pillow, closed his eyes...

From the next bed orderlies hauled and pushed and pulled a man to the ward carriage. 'Je-es-s-s Christ' the man hissed. His face went white... Anne dashed at the bed, and made it up, rapidly, folding the corners of the sheets as she had seen Angelina do them, folding the blanket under at the end, so it would hang slantwise, rolling the sheet back so that the bed lay open, smooth and white. Perspiration dripped along her eyebrows, down her cheeks. The man on the cot next watched her every movement. Anne could feel his eyes as she worked. "Say nurse, could you get me somethin' to eat?" he said. "We ain't had anythin' to eat since, since,– well, I guess it was day before yesterday. Anyway, since before we marched all night and then went into them machine guns."

"I'll try." Anne found a closet at the end of the corridor. On a shelf stood a tray with a pitcher of milk. A nurse came bearing down on her. Anne explained, respectfully, to the nurse. "They aren't supposed to be fed out there," said the nurse. "They haven't been operated." The nurse rushed off. Anne took the milk. There was enough for three of the fifteen... She toiled, pulling and struggling, until the eighteen beds were somehow made. Every fifteen minutes an explosion. No time to listen to the 'Bertha' today... The air in the tent hot, fetid, filled with the odor of sweat from unwashed soldiers.

In the corner of the tent a young boy wept. A nurse looked at him: 'Only his nerves' she said. She went on. Anne bent over the boy. He wept on, careless, sobbing... Through the swaying window in the tent wall opposite, a square of setting sun fell on his face. "You have

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pain?" "Yes," piteously. He looked so very young... "Where?" "All over." He turned his thin face to the pillow. One nervous, brown hand clutched miserably at the sheet's edge. Anne went and got some rubbing vinegar from the matron. She lifted the boy's sheet, and began rubbing, slowly at his back. She moistened her hands with vinegar, and rubbed on, gentle, clumsy. Why had she not learned somewhere how to do this? Hands, moving up and down along the row of ridges on the boy's spine... How beautiful, a man's back... The Greeks, long ago, had made a statue in bronze, of a young boy,– the picture of it hung in Josiah's study at home... Little ridges, on either side, strong, curving muscles, under smooth skin. Anne's hands, moving up and down the muscles... From outside there came the explosion of another Bertha... Not more than six o'clock then... The sun had left the boy's face and was sinking over the roof of the hospital. Cries, echoing from the courtyard... Men's voices, screaming... Anne tried not to hear them... Tried to turn her mind off... Rub... Rub... Up and down, till your hands ached... At last the boy slept. A tear lay on his cheek, caught in soft down that grew there... Anne pulled the sheet across the slender back and tucked it.

"This one next?" The stretcher-bearers were edging their way among the beds. Sweat trickled down their faces... They grinned at Anne. The great man with two bad legs and a broken shoulder... Anne bent over him: "You can push yourself with one arm?" "Yes, Ma'am." There was a moment of waiting, of gathering courage. The sunburned face looked worried against the pillow. Last night he'd been luggin' a Goddamn heavy pack on his back,– "Now!" He raised himself, pushed, his face twisting suddenly. Anne lifted with all her might. It was like pushing on a mountain... "God!" he said sharply with the outgoing of his breath. Suddenly the great frame went limp, the rosy face was yellow, under its tan... "Fainted!" The orderly was cheerful. "Now we've got him. All together!" Somehow the great frame was on the stretcher. Anne turned away. Another job, done badly...

...

Day had turned to night outside the window... All day, it seemed, Anne had been doing things one after another, badly... Struggling against the suffering that overwhelmed her, gripped her... The woman who had sat back of Anne in church stood at the corner of the corridor in a blue dress, white apron, floating coif. 'I'm not going home,' she was saying. 'Why some of these nurses have been on duty twenty-four hours. There are fifteen hundred patients here now, in the space for seven hundred. And more coming...'

"Here! Just a minute," a nurse touched Anne's arm. "Perhaps you'll go down to the operating room and get a name put on this card." She pulled a card out from under the head of a man, unconscious, on a stretcher. "Stupid of the operating room," the nurse said to the orderly who pushed the ward carriage. She put her hand under the sheet, felt

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the man's chest. "He hasn't got any dog tag, either. He may go up, and how are we going to know who he was?" She handed Anne the card.

Anne walked down the long corridor among the crowded beds. A name... Time was when a man's face was a record... When you were killing them wholesale, there must be something written... The nurse had not been sure the operation written on the card was the operation done on the man,– thought maybe the cards had got mixed... A name... What difference did a name make? He was an operation... Just a case now... A log of wood, with part of it hacked off...

Men groaned, cried, coming out of ether... The assurance, the sunburned cheerfulness that they had had that afternoon was melting... Pain overwhelmed them... Anne walked on, between them. Must not stop... Must keep on going, through the agony... God, what was it for? Who had the right to do this? To make men suffer? Not one of these men, groaning, crying, had had any grudge against the Germans... Old men, behind the lines in every country, who got the young men into things like this... Old men, who ought not to be allowed to govern ... Who went on doing things the way they'd always done them...

The door into the courtyard at the foot of the stair stood open. From the yard outside a swift night breeze brought in the scent of roses... The gaping, black end of an ambulance was backed against the step there. Boots lay on shelves... Two men were pulling out a stretcher... Another log of wood, rolled in a blanket... "God damn!" said the stretcher-bearer, as the thing slipped, jolted downward. From the blanket a white, wan face looked up at Anne, a face without hope, almost without expression... Why should she stop, bend over this one? Hundreds of others all along the floor, here... And she was on an errand...

The operating room... Four bright lights, shining down on,– Anne turned her head away. But she must look at that horror on the table... She fixed her attention on the muffled figures, swathed in white linen. Not yet... Not yet... Ether, that choked you... From a table in the corner a man howled, struggled as they held a cone over his face. Unfamiliar words, he was yelling, curses, vile words... She was stepping on something wet, black,– no, red... Blood... Blood trickling in a little river across the cement... Her eyes, following it to the group under the slanting rays of light... Have to look sometime... A white figure, in a mask, cutting something with great shears, holding it up from,– It was flesh, from someone's leg, and he was throwing it in a pail, plop, plop, as butchers throw away the part that's not good. Nausea, rising... Blackness, coming across your eyes, making you reel...

Anne set her hand against the wall. Must not faint... She was here, and it was an operating room, and she must ask that a name be put on the card in her hand... It had been a card... Would be a card again,

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when she unrolled it... She must get a name, a personality, added to the record of an amputation... What was left of a man, must have a name... The last link that connected him with what he had been... A girl sitting, writing, in the corner... She would know...

...

A nurse, in another corner, beckoned as she went out. Was it to her? "Yes, you. Come here!" The nurse was sticking a needle into a man's arm... On the table a head turned ceaselessly from one side to the other, murmuring things... "Listen. He's going up," whispered the nurse. "They aren't going to operate. See if you can get him some brandy, will you? We're so busy..." Anne rushed past another stretcher coming in. In the corridor a surgeon, his sleeves rolled up, sat on a window sill, smoking a cigarette, his white figure silhouetted against the blue night beyond him... Roses blossoming in the courtyard out beyond him... Brandy... The Supply Room, perhaps, on the fourth floor... Anne's hand pushed the cold iron of the stair rail as she ran up. Running, to beat Death... So, in dreams...

The fourth floor Supply Room, empty... Anne stood, panting. Up the dimly lighted corridor came a night nurse, carrying something covered with a white cloth. Brandy? Yes, cheerfully, she thought there was some, somewhere. She set the thing down, came, smiling. Professional cheerfulness... Cheerful, in the face of Hell... The nurse was slow, accurate in her movements, not at all flustered.

"Have you a requisition?" she asked.

"A man, dying..."

"You should have a requisition." Her hands were moving bottles about, setting them in a neat row, two inches to the left of where they stood before, looking between them... At last, she had it... She poured it, slowly, into a small glass. 'You'll bring the glass back,' she was saying... Anne seized it, fled. She held it before her, careful not to jiggle it as she ran downstairs. Past the entrance door, among the stretchers, into the smell of ether, of blood, of perspiration...

The stretcher in the corner of the operating room had gone... In place of it there stood a great machine, with something dangling... Anne looked around the room, walked round it, dazed. She could look at the table under the light now... Look at it with no sensation at all, if only she could find that soldier, dying... 'Funny how this room gets so crowded!' An operating nurse, washing her hands at the sink, looked Anne up and down, talking to a nurse who held a bowl beside her. Anne fled out to the corridor. Stretchers standing in the hall... Where...Where... She asked an orderly: "A man who was dying?" "There's lots of 'em," the orderly remarked as he shoved in the next one...

Slowly she made her way along the corridor, past the row of waiting stretchers, out into the empty brick well of the stairs. The stairs were iron, empty... The rail was cold... She gripped it, pulled her heavy

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body up. Her feet ached, and her back. Had it been yesterday that she had come here? Must go on up, up, pulling, lifting heavy feet... Silly to divide time into days and nights... As if they were the same length... Some days and nights were years... Years that seared themselves into your brain... That nothing would erase, till Death got you, too... Must go on, round the next corner, up two more steps... She held a card in her hand, with a name on it, the number of a regiment in the army,– the name of a man who had been on the next floor... She turned it, absently between her fingers. What could it matter who the man was? The regiment,– Anne stopped, holding the card, staring at it! 'Sixteenth Infantry,' that girl had written... Geoffrey's regiment... Gooseflesh, rising under her damp clothes... Geoffrey... Where was he? Perhaps this man upstairs could tell her... Careful... Must not bump the beds, as you sped past them...

The nurse held her finger against her lips. She took the card and jammed it onto a nail above the man's bed. The man moaned, breathed heavily, mouth open, making little snorts... Anne turned, and walked off. Down the corridor a man was coming out of ether.

"Better watch that feller," said an orderly. "He kicked some going under. 'K out for his left leg!" Anne sat down on the bed's edge. A little breeze came through the open window. Outside, from the black sky, familiar stars looked down. The Dipper, out there... Her head, full of ether... The man in the bed murmured, turned his head, was still. She watched the outlines of his face in the dim light,– a heavy brow, thick nose, full red lips. Who was he, that she was sitting here, and tending? The man groaned, tossed his arm from under the bedclothes. "The God damned son of a bitch told me to do it!" he shouted suddenly. "I done it because he told me..." His words faded off and he was still again... Anne pulled the sheet back over him. "Why that's blood," he murmured, "warm. He's dead. Leave him be..." Silence ... "God! Where am I?" He shouted wildly, starting to raise himself up.

"You're in the hospital," said Anne. "You're all right." She put one hand on his shoulder, and with the other she clasped the rough brown hand on the sheet. It closed, like a vise, on hers. So might the hand of a man drowning close... The man wept. "I ain't sorry," sobbing, choking... "God damned fool! Don't let me go!" the hand gripped hers again, "don't let me back again!" Anne sat silent, holding the huge, rough hand... Out, through the open window she could see the trees now, dark spectres rustling there against a dim grey. The greyness, growing... A chill coming in that window... The tough hand loosened slowly. The man's breath came regularly, softly. Asleep... She drew her hand away and bending over him, she tucked the blankets.

"O my God, why don't they stop?" A voice, filling the whole corridor... Filling the whole world... "Why don't they stop? O, God, why don't they stop?" it wailed. A dark man, with a pale face, his head

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tossing... Anne must walk past that man... No other way to go... Why *didn't* they stop? What were they all doing, anyhow? A shock of black hair above a thin face, a fine, aquiline nose, a sharp chin thrust upward, chin tossing this way, that way: "O God, why don't they stop? Why don't they stop... O God..."

Anne almost ran through the corridor. Get away from it... Get away... Somebody gave her coffee... It was in a little room, and there were other people... People immeasurably far away... Their heads too big... Tired faces, drinking from big, blue bowls... She went back, through the corridor, past the beds. A day nurse met her, coming on duty, fresh and starchy. "Good morning," she said, cheerful.

"O God!" a voice behind her wailed, "why don't they stop? Why don't they stop... O, God..." Anne rushed past the thin, dark man, his head still tossing. The voice pursued you down the stairway. Echoed ... Echoed... 'O, God! why don't they stop? Why don't they stop? O, God...'

...

She found her bicycle and pushed it slowly. A dull, grey light among the mottled trunks of plane trees... Under her aching feet damp gravel, crunching... Ambulance drivers, standing, their cigarette ends glowing... 'Tired?' they said...

The bicycle rolled easily along the pavement. Nice not to have to walk... Anne breathed long draughts of damp air. The dawn turned the wet pavements blue, the houses blue-white. Shutters rattled, being shoved up. The street rolled past her. Anne pushed on, quiet. At the end of every breath, there was a taste of ether. Ether, stuck in your throat... And in your ears a voice, crying... 'Why don't they stop, why don't they stop... O, God...' A tune, stuck in your soul... She pedalled to that tune...

A French guard stood before the striped sentry box at the Porte Maillot. Through the dim light he watched a girl ride past on a bicyclette, her blue coif streaming. A girl's pale face... Eyes that suffered... 'C'est la guerre,' said the sentry, watching her straight back...

Behind the Arc de Triomphe the sky glowed red. Anne put her feet up, coasted down the long slope toward the river. White mist rose from the Seine, meeting the golden sunlight... From somewhere came the explosion of the six o'clock shell. Another day, then...

...

Anne's room was empty, quiet. On a table by the open window, someone had left her dinner... Its gravy hardened... Through the empty frame of the window, she could see the needle of the Eiffel Tower, its top in sunlight. The little courtyard lay, damp, green, in morning shadow. Every morning the courtyard looked just like this...

How could things look the same? Anne did not feel the same. Knew she would never feel the same, as long as she lived... She ate the cold food, chewing the hard grease. What did food matter? If only

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shoes were not so hard to pull off... Feet, swollen... That did not matter, either... Stretchers full of men, men with names lost, identity gone from them... Men crying out, clutching with lonely hands at darkness... Men suffering... Women suffered, through the centuries, to bring men into this crazy world... Was it by War that the score of suffering between man and woman evened up, then? Women ought not have children... That would stop it... Men, dying, in agony, alone there...

Cool folds of her nightgown, touching her back... Back, aching, where clothes had for such a long, long time been sticking... She pulled a blanket over the bed. Blankets, soaking up blood... Mustn't think, – Life unbearable if you began thinking... Soft bed... The sheets, cool, smooth... Mustn't let yourself think at all... Not in war... The pillow, her head, not very comfortable... Too tired to turn it... Perhaps somebody would lift it for her... She had been lifting heads... Can you lift a little? O God, why don't they...

...

Anne opened her eyes. A girl stood in the room. Before the fireplace, doing her hair... Her back was toward Anne. The girl was looking in the mirror over the mantelpiece, picking up something now and then off the smooth marble... Pretty hair, curly, dark brown,– hair like some Anne had seen somewhere, long, long ago when she was little ... The girl was standing in her chemise, her shoes and stockings. Her bare arms, long and slender. The back of her neck was smooth and very white. A lovely neck... Anne lay, quite still, her head against the pillow, watching. Pleasant to open one's eyes like that and find somebody to watch... Queer that the sky outside should be so full of sunlight...

The girl made quick movements with her long, thin hands, picking up the comb, drawing it down through the side of the hair that was still loose and made a little crackle. Pulling hair out of the comb, twisting it into a ball, throwing it into the fireplace below. The stockings were silk and they were tightly gartered... Smooth, new, silk stockings, with no holes, no darns... Long ago one had had stockings like that... Impossible to get now... And shoes... American shoes,– new, polished, well-cut... Like shoes people used to wear in another world, where you,–

Both sides of the girl's hair were pinned now. Anne could almost see the girl's face in the mirror. One crooked, white elbow was in front of it. The girl twisted the pretty hair into a knot. Something familiar about that knot... Long, white fingers giving it little pokes... Where was it Anne had seen that hair, those slender fingers? In the mirror,– Rosalind's face. Rosalind turned round.

"Hello..." Anne lay and smiled, one arm above her head, against the pillow.

"Anne!" Rosalind came, and bending over, kissed her. Rosalind's

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cheeks were fresh and cool as they touched hers. The smell of pure, green soap... Clean and unscented... Home soap...

"How d'you get here?" Anne said.

"I came in this morning from Brest. Anne, where's Randolph? Have you seen him? Is he all right?"

"I saw him ages ago. They say his escadrille's up on the Somme somewhere. Sure, he's all right. Randolph's all right. I must get up and try to find some breakfast."

"Breakfast? Why, Anne, dear, it's afternoon!"

"So it is," said Anne. "It must be Sunday..."

...

While Anne dressed, Rosalind talked of people that they'd both known. Long ago, that... People who were legends... So Hugh MacDonald's wife had had a child... Was going to have another... Happenings that had nothing whatever to do with this life... Uncle Caleb, – Anne could see his hair parted down the middle of the back, reaching his collar,– Uncle Caleb had had potatoes planted on the front lawn. Food *must* be short, then... Aunt Anna,– large, well dressed, well fed... Anne's mother, Josiah,– they alone were real in the old life... They remained alive, waiting... Anne listened eager: 'And how *is* Mother?'

She pinned Mademoiselle Duffot's coif about her hair. "You look beautiful in that," said Rosalind, "what's it for?"

"I'm going to the hospital. There's a drive, you know..."

"A what?"

"A push,– a drive along the front, an attack. They're in an awful jam out there right now."

"I'll come with you. I'll change into my uniform."

"No, better not," said Anne. "Better wait till after you've reported. Better not plunge right in,– on that." She shook her head. "In war, you know, nobody ever hurries..."

...

Anne pushed her bicycle among the Sunday crowds at the Porte Maillot. Trying to steel herself to meeting 'that'... She would be calm today... Adamant and efficient, like the nurses... Would treat each patient merely like a 'case,' and if she could do nothing for him, leave him... Not agonize about the 'nerves' of 'cases'... The nurses were superb... Great rocks of strength against which waves of agony dashed and broke, and swashed away, and left them, standing. "Infirmière," a French woman said cheerfully, snatching her child back from before Anne's wheel. Anne smiled at her.

"I wish I was," she said...

...

The Hospital. Summer sunshine, slanting across green lawns and yellow gravel... Ambulances, heavy laden, rumbling in... Others, also laden, rumbling out... Inside, the place was calmer. Beds stood in

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STOCKWELL HALL

every corridor, on the stair landings. Yet some of the chaos of yesterday had vanished. Anne went to the Registrar's office on the ground floor. Her mouth dried... Could hardly ask that question... "A lieutenant named Wentworth? Sixteenth Infantry?" the Sergeant repeated. "No officers here, lady! He'd be over the other side of Paris. We got a pile of men out of the Sixteenth, though, up on Ward D. Your brother? Tell you what I'll do, I'll call the Orficers' Hospital up for you. Come back in half an hour,– Sir?" A captain, roaring at the Sergeant... Anne walked off...

...

Ward D. Men in beds... Fifteen or more dazed faces, looking at you as you walked among them... The sunburned ruggedness of yesterday was all gone. Ether, a night of pain... Today the tan only made their skins look yellow... These men no longer asked where the boys would be when they went back up. They lay, quiet, waiting... "Say nurse, could you find my clothes, and get a photo out of the pocket of my blouse for me?" A young boy looked up at Anne. "It's a picture of my folks," he said, "I'd hate to lose it."

"What outfit?"

"L Company, Sixteenth Infantry."

"You know Lieutenant Wentworth?" Anne tried not to sound too eager.

"No Ma'am. Don't know him. But all the lewies was killed."

"I heard,–" A cough, a faint voice, behind her... Anne turned. The man in the next bed was gassed. He raised himself and spit into a small glass bowl that stood on the table by the bedside. Coughing... Grey phlegm... Blood... She put her hand under his forehead. His head went heavy. His whole insides... There... Better... Lie back... His eyes, all,– "I heard a feller in the bed next to me last night," the man went on, hoarse, "talkin' about Lieutenant Wentworth. H Comp'ny wasn't he?" Cough... Tears from the red eyes... "This guy next me was from I Comp'ny. Said... Wentworth... led H Comp'ny... over the top..." A whisper... Anne bent down. 'Yes?' "Thought he was hit runnin' acrost the field." Eyes closing...

"This man was here, in the hospital? You know his name?"

"Don't know his name. They took him,–" Cough... Spit... "out of here last night."

"Thank you. I'll empty this." She took the glass bowl. Eyes away from it, and you could get there all right...

...

She made her way upstairs. Among the hundreds who lay there, she could not find the man from I Company. She went back to the ward. Find something to do... Work...

...

"If you could just police up the floor," the nurse said, "empty the sputum cups, clean up the tables in between the beds. The doctor'll

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be around in half an hour. After that you can give baths. We haven't had a chance yet to wash any of them." The nurse was cheerful, smiling. She took a thermometer from a man's mouth, turned to a chart...

Men's eyes followed Anne as she moved among the beds. Emptying cups of spit, with cigarette ash sinking in it... Pushing it out with a paper, cleaning the cup in a basin filled with strong smelling disinfectant... Wiping the glass tops of the tables... A damp cloth, clammy ... Feeling sick, nauseated... Ashamed of yourself for feeling nauseated ... Going on... Carrying bottles of urine to a hopper... Emptying them, rinsing, bringing them back... Setting them down where the men could reach them... Sweeping spilt cigarette ash out from under beds, and bits of old food... Cleaning little, kidney-shaped, white tin basins, putting them back... Men eyeing them, seizing them suddenly ... Men retching, coughing, their heads going limp in your hands... Your gorge, rising... Ough... Coward to feel sick... Must walk on with the basins... Do these jobs... Men's eyes, following you, all about the room as you worked... 'Did you say you knew somebody in H Comp'ny?' The man was very sick and weak. He lay flat, with no pillow. A bandage round his head...

"Yes," Anne bent low over him, searching his eyes. "Lieutenant Wentworth. You know him?"

"He took us over," the man whispered. "There was some town we was supposed to be takin'. The Lieutenant was runnin' ahead of us. Boys... would go anywhere... after... Wentworth..." The man's eyes, closing... As if the lids were too heavy for him to hold up... But no, they opened. 'Yes?' Surely he must see how much she wanted,– "I got hit. But he... was..." the head turned away, slowly... A twinge of pain caught him... "was goin' ahead. Laughin', he was..."

"Thank you," said Anne. She smoothed his bed for him, straightened his sheet.

"That one you can wash. This one you'd better,–" the nurse was talking to Anne as she went past. Anne got a basin with warm water, a washcloth, Castile soap. If you could only remember how it was they washed you when you were ill... She looked into another ward where a Nurse's Aide was washing someone. She watched. She came back, put down her basin next a man's bed. 'Now, then...'

Dirt, ground into tough skin... Hairs growing there among the dirt, like trees... Anne scrubbed and scrubbed, dried it, moved the sheet up, went on. Grimy skin with hairs,– men had been beasts once... The smell of sweat... Thighs curving... Hairs... The,– Men, then, not all Greek statues... There were some things one had not thought one could do... But one could... One could do anything, when the time came... When there was no way out... The man was cheerful, patient ... "Good to git washed." He lay, like a great child. You were his nurse, his mother, doing things for him... "That's great!" He smiled

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across the white sheet when it was done. On to the next... Men... Such hairy creatures...

Suppers, already, in broad daylight... Tin plates, sloppy soup, vegetables,– all lukewarm. Men had to be fed like babies when they had no hands... Things caught on their chins. You scraped them with a spoon, growing beards, rasping. You had to light their cigarettes for them. And watch for agonized eyes that asked to be rescued from a cigarette that would burn,–

Where did you suppose their outfit had got to now? You didn't know. Nobody knew anything in war... Gee, it would be nice to see the boys again! Eyes, flashing,– then they looked down at their bandages, remembered... Light fading from their eyes... Their families, Anne suggested, could she write to them? No, Ma'am, they didn't want anybody to write their families. They'd wait till they were well,– The bandages again... Hard to remember... That one would never be well... Outside, somewhere, explosions banged away the hours...

...

The Sergeant in the Registrar's office had not been able to locate Lieutenant Wentworth. Didn't think he was in Paris. A man had just come in from the Sixteenth, though, who'd heard he'd been killed. But the soldiers didn't know the officers' names half the time. He wouldn't give up hopin' till he *knowed* somethin'... Anne thanked him, turned away. Did anyone know anything? Or had everyone gone mad? The whole world gone mad... How could people know things when everyone was mad?

...

A pale boy, with an olive skin lay in the corridor. Great, dark eyes gazing through the window... She heard his breath go out in a long, trembling sigh as she passed him. The boy was young, Italian,– from those soft eyes... "What's the trouble?" Anne bent over the bed. Tears in the brown eyes... One arm lay along the sheet, swathed in bandage.

"I used to play the violin," he said. "My mother took in wash. She saved her money. She bought my violin, paid for my lessons. But I was making money for her when the war came." Anne looked at the hand, flattened against a board. Only one finger tip showed above the bandage...

"Your fingers?" she asked. The boy nodded. A tear trickled down his temple, dropped on the pillow...

"I lay all afternoon wondering if they were gone,– I can still feel 'em. I didn't dare look. After supper, I looked." He turned his head. Didn't want the lady to see him crying...

"Shall I get some paper and write a letter to your mother for you?"

"No, Ma'am," said the boy quietly. "My mother, she'd be all broke up if she knew."

...

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Ward D was tucked up, ready for the night. The night nurse came. Anne reported back to the office for another job. There was a ward away upstairs, where the French patients were, the Head Nurse said. The nurse up there hadn't had time to eat. Would Anne go up? Very kind, the Head Nurse added, of these ladies to come and help them... She didn't know what they would have done, with fifteen hundred patients where they were ready for seven hundred and fifty at most...

Anne found a long, low room, with gabled windows. French soldiers lay in low beds. Bottles hung above their heads, and from the bottles little tubes ran in among the bandages on their wounds. A tired, dull look about the eyes of these men... They did not ask for things. Did not yell 'Say nurse!' Did not watch you... Just lay still, taking the world for granted... They had been here six months...

A nurse showed Anne how to turn on the Dakin solution, told her how long to let it run. Anne went from bed to bed. Whatever she did for them, they said, 'Merci, Madame.' They did not smile, looked neither pleased nor pained. They lay there, quiet, infinitely bored, resigned... Suffering,— the Americans downstairs struggled against it... For these men, struggling had ceased... Six months... A year, two years,— Anne read dates on the records over their beds. No wonder they were weary...

Orderlies pushed a ward carriage toward an empty bed. One of them held a string, tied through the man's tongue. The head, above the mouth was swathed in bandage. One leg, a thick, white sausage, rolled in bandage... It seemed too long for the bed... How heavy men were... "Isn't there any nurse on this ward?" The operating nurse looked round.

"She's gone to supper," Anne said. The operating nurse was bending over the bed, smoothing things, patting them, moving the long white thing that had been a leg. The nurse picked up a card. "Lacerations of the scalp with possible concussion. Fracture of the scapula. Compound fracture of the femur. Infection,—" She hung the card up. "Just see he doesn't throw himself round," she said to Anne, and walked off.

Anne watched the trig, white figure disappearing. Confidence, power to do good, going... Anne trembled, knowing nothing. If one had known the world would smash itself like this,— One might have learned to be a nurse then... The man on the bed groaned. Anne raised the sheet, looking to see where she could touch him without pressing on a wound. There was one arm, one shoulder, that was still good. He groaned again. An animal that was hurt... In some life, somewhere, Anne had done this all before... In some dream, she had seen this same man out of ether... "Contact!" the man shouted. After a moment: "Coupé." He did not try to move. "Coupé. Coupé," he called hoarsely, choking on blood in his throat. His lips were swollen... "Afraid of the carburetor," he muttered. Anne bent over. Not French

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... American... That was American... "She's skipping," he said suddenly. "Suppose she skips when I get up. Ah, ça va! She's off!"

Anne listened, leaning forward. That voice... She looked at the card above the bed. NAME: Pendleton, Randolph. Rank: Sergeant. Unit: Escadrille No. 77...

"That damned aileron," he was yelling. "God, it's all up, now! Eyes on the horizon. Didn't know the damned old world could spin so... That wire, if I could catch that wire..." The body twitched, his free hand clutching... Anne put her hands on his shoulders, held him back against the bed. "Quiet," she said. "It's all right."

"All right, Hell!" he muttered. "Not coming back... Tell Amélie... Never... coming... back... Out of *that* mess... Got to get that wire..." He lurched again. "That's pain," he mumbled. "Got my leg... Got me ... Other foot's all right. Could push her up again with that. Amélie ... To see her, once, once..." A little stream of blood oozed from between his lips, trickling downward toward the sheet. Anne pushed a bit of gauze under it. "My God! Where am I?"

"You're in bed, Randolph, in the hospital. You're all right."

"Mother..." The word trailed, to a whisper...

"I'll take him now." The ward nurse came in, cheerful. Nice to have a surgical case amid the dullness of the old French ward... "Got the rest of these people all fixed up for the night, now. A slight hemorrhage." She reached for Randolph's hand, counted his pulse... Anne turned to go. Nothing for her to do now...

...

A woman was sitting on a bench in the main corridor of the hospital. Anne watched her from the iron stairway as she came down. A chic, white satin hat, that shone against the dark brick wall, the concrete floor... Dark tailored suit, white stockings crossed under the short skirt, high-heeled, stub-toed, French shoes... A slim hand in white kid, dangled from the white satin cuff that rested on the end of the stone bench. The woman turned her head, looked at Anne. Almond-shaped eyes... Long lashes... The same woman... The woman of the straw-colored hair at the Opéra... The woman walking with Randolph, on the Avenue du Bois... The woman was going to speak to her... Good Lord.

"Mademoiselle!" A voice like silver sleigh bells... The reddened lips parting over glistening white teeth... Eyes that had suffered... Eyes that were suffering right now... So she cared, then...

"Oui, Madame?" Anne was brusque, Puritan. Foolish to be Puritan in war...

"You are the friend of M. Pendleton, is it not so? Mademoiselle Wentworth, the sister of his great friend? He has told me of you. He admires you! And I believe he has also talked to you of me? Yes. One has told me that he has been wounded over the front near Montdidier. Une horrible vrille! He fell in the American lines, one

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said, it is a friend of mine in the politique who has informed me, over the telephone, this evening. My friend learned that the wounded from Cantigny were being sent here; that,– that our brave friend might be at this hospital. At the hospital office, one does not wish to tell me anything, Mademoiselle."

"He is here, Madame,–"

"Ah, tell me, he is then in danger? He is seriously wounded? You have seen him?"

"He has been operated on," Anne said. What if Rosalind had come here with her? Must find some way to keep this woman away from Randolph... Till... Till... He could choose... "One cannot tell how he is. He is not yet out of ether." Anne pulled her bicycle from behind the big door.

"Ah, you are going, Mademoiselle! Perhaps I can accompany you?" Anne pushed her bicycle. Queer pair, they must make... Anne, in her cape, and coif, her broad, flat tennis shoes. This woman, in her dark blue, touched off with white, the chic of Paris... About them, summer darkness... "Your brother and he are great friends, is it not so?" said the woman. "Et à propos, how goes it with your brother?" Anne told her what she knew.

"Ah, quelle tristesse!" The woman stopped. She laid one white gloved hand on Anne's arm. A scent, of,– "But do not lose hope! Tomorrow you will meet a soldier who will know something. Ah, how well I know what it is to be in uncertitude and to wait..." Anne watched her. The suffering of the whole world in those half-closed eyes... "But you are tired, Mademoiselle," she said. "You want to mount your bicyclette. I shall take the Métro here..." She paused. "Mademoiselle, you will be at the hospital? You will have news of our brave friend? I can come tomorrow?"

"While they have need, I shall be there in the evenings till ten. Perhaps it would be better if you came and asked me on my way out, instead of going to the office of the hospital. They are busy,–" Anne paused. How could you tell her the rules about French women...

"And if he asks for me, you will tell him I have come?"

"If he asks," said Anne. She watched the white feet, moving in short, stiff steps across the pavement. She put her foot on the pedal of her bicycle, standing, waiting a moment, for an approaching automobile to pass. Wonderful that one was not killed these dark nights, with no lights... A great, dark silhouette, coming toward you... Large, army car... The blue light from the Métro station fell under the hood as it slowed down for the corner. Fell on the faces of,– Lettice and the Colonel. Sitting in the back seat, close together... Clinging to one another in the darkness... Her head, clasped to his shoulder as they whisked past... Anne mounted her bicycle, pushed it into the thick darkness of the street. Somewhere a clock struck twelve...

...

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Rosalind had gone to bed when Anne got home. Anne was glad of that. She had not made up her mind yet. Rosalind would never understand this... Joan sat before the open window of Anne's room. Joan had been feeding refugees at the Gare de L'Est. "Hear anything of Geoffrey?" she said, as Anne came in.

"He led his company across a field, and, and,— I can't find anyone who saw him after that." Anne sank down in a chair. Tired feet, aching there against the window sill... Eyes, gazing out into the blackness of the night... Geoffrey, out in the blackness, somewhere... Randolph, unconscious, groaning, tossing back and forth... Rosalind, full of hope, in the next room, sleeping... The suffering in the eyes of Amélie Delsart... Joan, sitting there, gazing, anxious... The world came on your shoulders, heavy... Heavy...

Joan got up, bustled round the washstand in the corner. "I'm making you a cup of tea," she said. Joan, practical, kind, always... "Ros reported at the R.C. this afternoon," she was saying. "They're sending her out to the hospital tomorrow,—"

"My God!" said Anne.

"What's the matter?" Anne began slowly taking her clothes off.

"Nothing," she said...

...

She would not tell Rosalind about Randolph. Anne had decided this before she finished her roll and chocolate in the morning. She sat, propped up in bed, eating, gazing out at the tall spike of the Eiffel Tower. No use exciting Randolph, getting him all fussed up about anybody right now... The chances were that Rosalind would go on one of the downstairs wards. She might easily work there a month without finding Randolph in the French ward... But if she did find out? Or if he died? Anne set her tray down. There was Amélie Delsart... If Rosalind knew about Randolph, she would hover over him. Sooner or later she would run into Amélie, and Amélie would have to be explained, and then,— If only Rosalind had been over here a little longer... If only she knew,— And had begun to understand, accept it... If she could see the men's side,— Then you could tell her... But not now... Not straight from America, thinking of war as danger and as glory, suspecting nothing... Rosalind mustn't know about Amélie Delsart... Not unless Randolph told her...

"How about the office? You going to get up?" Joan, standing in the doorway. Joan, all dressed. Gosh. Anne sprang up.

"Sure. Be ready in a second," she said...

...

There was a tenseness, a strange quiet about the office. The Major sat upright, in his corner, papers piled round him, worried expression on his face. Barry Caldwell stood, holding the telephone receiver, feverishly, 'allo Mademoiselling.' In the chair beside Anne's desk sat a strange lieutenant, sorting over papers. Anne hung her hat up

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quickly. General must be here... The door of the inner office opened, and a pleasant, elderly gentleman in gold-rimmed glasses looked out. Hard to think of this man as a general,– "Ask Henderquist to come down, Nelson. Try to get Chaumont on the wire, Caldwell. I'll dictate some telegrams, please, Miss Wentworth."

Anne stood behind him, note book ready, looking at the pink muslin scalp of his grey wig. 'Won't you sit down?' A telegram being dictated, clear, coherent. Another and another and another. Why, he was planning a campaign, this mild man... "That's all." Anne hurried to the outer office. Strange to be working... Working at top speed, furiously. Typewriter clacking. Telephone ringing. Telegrams, one after another, being sent out. Colonels arriving, puffing, from the stairway. Anne, ushering them in to see the General. The other General, of the Vestal Virgins office, coming. Still another from the front, tall, slim black-haired, laughing as he strode through. Not out of breath, that one... 'The Flying General' muttered Barry Caldwell. The white door closed behind them.

Anne went in with a letter,– Heavens, the generals and all the colonels squatting on the General's floor about a big map. Sticking in pins with little colored flags on their tops. 'The 97th better go here, Sir.' The 'Flying General's' long fingers moved a small flag. The General's pen moving, handing her back the letter. 'Let me see, Mitchel, you said...' Anne closed the white door. It opened. The General, talking to a lieutenant. 'You'll go to the front, just south of Dormans. Find out...' Anne pounded at the keys. Mustn't listen... Must finish this report to go to England... 'Expect you back at four o'clock,' the General, saying... Heavens, eleven o'clock now... Anne tapped on... 'Yes, Sir,' said the Lieutenant...

...

Anne ate a raw egg, a piece of cheese, drank a glass of milk at an épicerie across the street, and ran back. No time to go home,– the General, apparently, never stopped to eat things... The Major had a letter to be copied. 'CONFIDENTIAL' written across its top in great, red letters. A lieutenant, who had brought it, waited, strolling casually about the office. "But this is dated London, written today," Anne said. "How did it get here?"

"I flew over with it, this morning," said the Lieutenant. "I'm starting back from Orly Field at half past three. You have the answer there, I believe." Anne's fingers careened on. Part of a great machine... Moving... Moving at last, thank God...

...

Seven o'clock, eight, nine... Everyone tired... Everyone haggard, hungry... Everyone it seemed, except the General... He, behind the closed white door, serene, cool, always working. Barry Caldwell shook his head as Anne came out, began another letter. At half past nine the door opened, and the General went home.

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"Good God!" said Barry Caldwell.

...

Anne got to the office at seven-thirty next morning, instead of half past nine as was the custom. The General's door already shut... The General's aide already sitting in the outer office... By the time Barry Caldwell and the Major came in at eight o'clock, Anne had four letters and six telegrams ready to go out...

...

"Come out to dinner with me." Jerry Suydam strolled into the office at six o'clock that evening. His uniform, his wrapped puttees, his boots were covered with spots, with dust. "Can't," Anne hardly looked up from her typewriter. "I've got too much to do,—" She stopped, Jerry's kind face, haggard,— sort of tragic... She hoped he wouldn't stay and argue. Hoped he'd go.

"Anne! I'm going way up to the Vosges tomorrow!" Jerry, reproachful,— entirely unconscious of the Major, looking at his wrinkles... Not seeing Barry Caldwell, so neat, so dapper in the other chair there... "Can't help it," Anne said. "The General," she jerked her thumb toward the inner door,— "there, he's ringing,—" She picked up a note book, pencil, fled. A glass door with white silk curtains closed behind her.

Jerry sank to the armchair in the corner, sat, staring at the carpet. Tired... Hadn't slept more than two hours at a time all the past week ... Had carried wounded men until his back ached... Tended them on his hands and knees, making awkward bandages as they lay in the dirt... Had been at Château-Thierry when the Marines came in in truckloads,— watched the boys jump out, run forward, without arms,— arms, somehow, had miscarried. Jerry had run with them. As they went they seized rifles, with long, angled, bayonets from French soldiers, straggling toward them... Jerry, too, had seized one, had run on, panting, struggling, fighting, shouting, bellowing, smashing at people with the butt end of a rifle, sticking them with that long, sharp thing, seeing them dimly as they crumpled forward... Putting his foot on 'em and pulling the thing out... Something inside of Jerry had burst wide open, pulled him forward, made him yell, curse, fight like a demon... By God, nobody could stop him,— just this once,— from fighting... He'd show 'em that you didn't have to have good eyes to hit those Germans. Jerry stirred suddenly in the red plush armchair. The Major and Barry Caldwell turned, looked at the uncouth Y.M.C.A. man in the corner. Jerry sank back, dejected. So they'd taken the town, and the officers had discovered Jerry did not belong there... 'I'd keep him, Lieutenant,' the Regular Army Sergeant had said, 'he's a soldier, that guy!' But they had sacked him... Jerry had lost his truck, and found another... Reported to a doctor in a field near by... Been loaded up with groaning wounded, and sent to Paris...

The road to Paris... That had set him thinking. Paris,— Anne...

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Anne... No, it wasn't thinking... One didn't think in this life... One felt, one groaned inside, one wanted... Wanted... That was it. Wanted, to see her, to feel her smooth hair, kiss her tired, white face... Her eyes, clear,– would they,– Wanted to feel,– God, what had got into him up there at Château-Thierry? He, the parson, who used to wear a surplice and a cassock... Who used his brains to try to justify religion... What did religion matter? He wanted to,– Jerry shifted in the armchair. Anne had shut that door between him and her... These officers here, these minions of a General, eyeing him, meanly... They'd be saying 'Who won the war?' in half a minute... By God, he'd won the war as much as they had! They hadn't stuck a bayonet in a German... No spots of blood under the dirt on *their* pants...

Jerry got up, shuffled from the office, down the stairway. What in Hell did they have all these girls in here for?

...

He waited on the sidewalk. Was still standing there when Anne came out at seven-thirty. She was going to eat quickly, at the restaurant at the corner, and go back, she said. Eh bien, Jerry was going to eat quickly with her... Hadn't eaten any way but quickly in two weeks... He walked along beside her. Couldn't she feel this, this,– She must... "What's happening on the front?" She asked quite calmly. A bounce in Jerry's step, carrying him forward... Anne could hardly keep step.

"We're putting morale into the thing," he said. "You ought to have seen that station platform up at Château-Thierry, covered with wounded Frenchmen, just lying there, desperate, down and out, done in. I was trying to do something for them, but you couldn't. They didn't care. The war was over, they said. The Boches would get to Paris this time, kill them all, kill everybody, kill France. Let the Boches come. They were done, fini, capout. Then a little, old train of box cars pulled in, and our Marines piled out. By Jove, how they did look! Husky, full of pep, kidding each other. And they hadn't had anything to eat in twenty-four hours, mind you! They lined up in the street, back of the platform. When they got the order to march, they sang... 'Over There,' swinging past, all bellowing at the top of their lungs. Then they struck up 'Smiles,' and so they went off, up the hill, through the damned, shot-to-pieces town. And as they went by, those old wounded Frogs sat up on the platform, and saluted,–

"Let me see, let's have Lobster Thermidor,–" Jerry stopped, looked at Anne. Had been going to tell her how he had watched it until he couldn't stand it any longer, how he'd joined in with the last truckloads, seized a bayonet... Now, he guessed, he wouldn't. He seemed to have put his foot in it... Seemed to be making her cry...

...

Anne arrived at seven-fifteen in the morning at the office. The

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General and his aide were there already. Like a steel spring, this General, snapping from one thing to another. Always courteous, always cheerful, always quiet. And yet one felt that he expected everyone to work as hard as he did. It was exciting. She worked on, unconscious of fatigue. Unconscious of time... 'He's leaving at three o'clock for G.H.Q.' Anne heard Lieutenant Nelson tell the Major. She banged on at her typewriter. Mustn't stop to listen for a moment... Things to be finished... At three o'clock the General came out, Colonel Henderquist with him, listening attentively to last instructions. 'It depends on us,' he was saying, 'on us...'

"Nelson," he turned, benignly, toward the aide standing next to Anne's desk, "I think we'll be off." So might a kind uncle have taken his young nephew on a picnic... The aide strapped up his brief case. The General shook hands with the Colonel, with the Major, with Barry Caldwell, with Anne. "Thank you, Miss Wentworth, thank you!" Taking his cap from Nelson, he set it, very close, very military, on his forehead. He turned, quietly, and walked out, Nelson trotting after. So that was the way Generals looked, going to war...

"By Jove!" The militarism melted from the Major. He slouched back in his corner, gasping. Anne sank into her chair, laughing. Why, – there was nothing to do now... She felt suddenly, that she was tired... The Colonel, seizing Anne's hat from the corner, setting it on his head, doing a little dance about the crimson carpet... Everyone laughing... Tears, running down their faces...

"It's a great war!" said Barry Caldwell...

...

Joan Porter was dressing. Tired... Since this new General had come, everyone seemed to work twice as hard at Aviation as they used to... Even the Colonel, in there every day at half past eight now... What with Anne, gone downstairs, and Lettice, coming in later and later in the mornings,– and very weepy and temperamental when she got there,– on the whole, work had doubled... Joan leaned forward, looked at her worn face in the mirror. And Monkey,– what was this mysterious trip toward the front that he had gone on? Oh dear, no letter from him for more than a week... Joan powdered her face slowly. Why didn't Anne come? The old General had gone now,– she ought to be back for dinner... The door opened and Rosalind came in. Rosalind, like a lovely straight Madonna in her plain uniform of light blue...

"I don't know what to do about Geoffrey, Joan." Rosalind stretched herself on Joan's bed. Tired... Joan turned, quickly, looked at her. Ready,– bracing herself... You'd known these things would,– A shadow in Rosalind's dark blue eyes... She lay there, white-faced, hands clasped behind her head. "A sergeant came onto my ward today who was in the next company to Geoffrey's. This man got wounded before they got into the town that they were taking. But he'd been in an ambulance somewhere with a man from Geoffrey's company. The

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man told him that Geoffrey led a squad of volunteers out to get a machine-gun nest, and that he was killed right off. The man said Geoffrey would never either dodge or keep his head down. That was like Geoffrey..."

Rosalind closed her eyes. The barn at Downham... A little boy, walking unsteadily along the gutter, high up against the blue sky... Leaning over, slowly, and picking up a small, black kitten. Clasping the kitten... Edging backwards, balancing with two fingers, his lower lip firmly held between his white teeth. His eyes, gazing at the gutter, never looking up or looking downward... 'But it was worth while to save Peter, wasn't it, Mother?' Rosalind opened her eyes. There was Joan, in the window, darning stockings. "Shall we tell Anne?" she said.

"Let's wait till we're certain," Joan said, "till you've seen a man who knows it himself,—" Anne opened the door and walked in: "Found anything?" She looked at Rosalind.

"Nothing more..." Anne began changing her clothes.

"I'm going out there myself this evening," she said...

...

Anne rolled her corsets, threw them into the waste basket by the desk. "They stick into me when I lean over beds," she said.

"If you leave them there, Clémentine will take them," Joan said.

"Let her," said Anne. "I'm through with 'em. Life's too short to make yourself as uncomfortable as all that."

"Why Anne," said Joan, "whoever heard of going round without them?"

"They do stick into you when you're bending over beds," said Rosalind. "I'd go without mine, only you feel so sort of,— sort of,— Of course, Mother'd think it was immoral."

"Our mothers don't know what it is to be immoral," Anne said...

...

Anne went straight to the French ward. A night nurse passed her at the doorway, carrying a French bouquet of flowers. "He is?" "Very bad," said the nurse. "Wound in his leg's infected. His mind wandering all the time. Still thinks he's falling..." The long figure tossed as Anne sat down by the bedside.

"Milburn," Randolph said, "I owe Milburn fifty francs. Pay him for me, will you..."

"I'll pay him, Randolph. It'll be all right." Anne took his hand in hers. Only way to let him know you were there... "If he's not dead when you get back," said Randolph. There was a pause. "She's going down!" he shouted. "By God, they can't burn me, I've got my gun, — But my damn fingers won't work... I'll jump... Jump..." The hand in Anne's twitched. "Oh, you're there are you? Tell... Amélie..." It was a whisper, and it trailed to nothing...

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"Didn't know you, did he?" The nurse came in, cheerful, watching for hopeful symptoms. She set the vase of flowers on a table.

"No," said Anne...

...

They sent Anne to make beds in a small room, out beyond D Ward. Must be ready for patients at nine-thirty. Anne must have six beds made before that. She bent over the beds, working quickly, smoothing the sheets, the corners... 'Ward H?' A woman's voice, asking... Coming already? Anne looked up. A short, middle-aged woman in civilian clothes was leading a tall man. Man with a bandage round his head, one hand held out in front, his fingers moving... "This way," the lady was saying. "Now to the left. There, this is your bed in the corner. Sit down. Tha-a-at's it!" The man started to put his legs up on the bed toward the pillow. The woman pushed them, gently, the other way. Anne, on the opposite side of the bed, pulled up the covers, began tucking them.

"There's somebody else?" the man called, suddenly, in a hoarse voice. His hand clutched at the air, clutched at Anne's shoulder, held it, trembling, a second, let it go.

"The nurse," the older woman was saying, cheerful, "now you'll be all right a minute while I go down and get the others." She bustled off. Anne turned to the other beds, went on working.

"My God!" The man in the corner rose up suddenly, sitting stretching out his arms, clutching the air. Anne went over to him. The clutching hands closed about hers, squeezing them, hurting, clinging... "What is it?" she said.

"There's a light in the room?" the hoarse voice whispered, pleading, desperate.

"Yes."

"My God!" He dropped back to the pillow, lay there silent. The lady had dropped a card. Anne stooped to get it. 'Mrs. H. G. Simmons, Société Américaine de Secours aux Aveugles de la Grande Guerre,' it said. Anne looked at the strong, browned hands of the young man in the corner. They twitched...

"Blind,—" he said. "Christ..."

...

Late night. Anne walked out, through the long corridor. Cowardly to go... Cowardly to escape the tragedy of that small ward... Men who lay, and didn't dare to sleep... 'Because when you wake up, you ain't really awake,—' one had whispered... Glad to escape the cheerfulness of that good lady who had worked, she said, for two years with men blinded by the great war... Of that silent, groping terror, the older woman seemed blandly unconscious... The men in the beds along the corridor wall, were sleeping. These men had lost only parts of bodies. Those others,— part of their soul... War easier on these... The air was heavy with their rhythmic breathing... In a bed by the

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wall a man lay staring. Something in his eyes that stopped Anne... She bent over, turned his pillow, tucked his wrinkled, messy sheet in. "I can stand the daytime," he was whispering, "but the night's so, so lonely..."

"There, you'll go to sleep now." Anne smoothed the damp hair back from his temples. "Good night." Suddenly, she bent, and kissed his forehead. Anne could feel his eyes as she walked on, through the semi-darkness... 'Good night, nurse...'

...

"Mademoiselle!" Amélie Delsart stepped from a limousine that stood among the dark shadows of the plane trees. "Our friend? He goes well? He is better?" Eyes with dark circles round them looked out from under the deep hat. Her white face, like a carven statue against the darkness...

"He is very ill," Anne stood, holding her bicycle. "He is still unconscious. You have been waiting?"

"One did not wish to let me enter, Mademoiselle. The guard would not let me pass the barrière."

"They do not allow visitors," Anne said. "But if you will give me your address, I will let you know when, when,—"

"Ah, merci, Mademoiselle. Perhaps that would be better. You will let me know when I can come to his aid. I have brought him a few flowers tonight,— the guard has sent them in. I live in the rue Marbeuf, Mademoiselle. Numéro..." Rue Marbeuf... It was there that Anne had first seen Randolph... They had been young then...

"I could take you home, Mademoiselle, in my automobile?" Amélie was saying. "It is so late, so dark..."

"Thank you. I have my bicyclette," said Anne...

...

Sun slanted through the open window of the office. The General gone,— the place regained its air of pleasant leisure. Barry Caldwell had his drawer out, sat with his feet up. Outside, sun shone on the broad leaves of the horse-chestnuts... "It hardly seems as if I'd seen you for a week," said Barry Caldwell, "I used to wonder, sometimes, whether you were one who knew how to work, or were,— well,— ornamental, like the Vestal Virgins. I apologize. I have to take my hat off!"

Anne pulled her drawer out, put her feet up. Hoped they weren't in for three more weeks of talk now... "Letter for you." The Major tossed over a slimsy envelope, addressed in a scrawly French handwriting. Anne opened it. Why, American handwriting inside,— somebody must have wanted to avoid the censor... Handwriting sort of familiar, yet she couldn't remember,— she shuffled over the pages. Oh yes, Jerry Suydam's. It used to come to her with books on his religion,— 'You may think I'm crazy.' Anne stared at it. She felt a strange misapprehension. Men did not normally write more than four

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sheets... Here were eight... 'I believe it was while I was coming back from Château-Thierry that I began to think about you differently. I can't quite tell now when it did begin. It seems as though it had been all my life, now. On my way up here into these hills, I thought about you every minute. Last night, out on the road, I knew suddenly, what was the matter...' Anne skipped a bit. She knew, now, what was coming. 'Filled the blank hole left by my religion...' She skipped again. What nonsense... Why should he think that, even if she were going to marry somebody, she would have picked him? Why must men, sooner or later, lose their self-control, become ridiculous...

Barry Caldwell leaned back, smoking, watching. A faint flush rising on Miss Wentworth's thin cheeks... Almost looked pretty as she sat there, reading... Eight pages, closely written, in that letter... By Jove, the fellow,— But she was putting it down now, on the desk before her, looking at him, humor suddenly lighting the grey eyes... She was laughing. "It's a great war," said Barry Caldwell, smiling. She was putting the letter in her pocket. Evidently the fellow had wasted his ink...

"Does it ever occur to you?" Anne asked him, "that people go a little bit mad in war-time?"

"Frequently. But they only seem to, they don't really," said Barry Caldwell. "War is a step back toward the primitive. Primitive men act quicker. It's all quite normal. They've got to get all their instincts satisfied before they jump off,— Live for all they're worth, while the living's still good." Anne turned round to see if the Major was in his corner. His chair was empty.

"The Colonel, for instance," she said...

"He's under a terrific strain," said Barry Caldwell, his keen eyes serious. "This whole business of getting planes depends, in a way, on him. Someone else, in America or somewhere, has flubbed it. We were supposed to have 5,550 bombing planes, D.H. 4's and 9's here from America by July first. And two thousand pursuit planes. And twelve hundred night bombers. July first's less than a month off, and we've got about two hundred planes from the U.S. so far. First one's on its way to Avency-le-Sec right now, isn't it?"

"I believe so," Anne said.

"Henderquist's had to keep asking for things from the French on the basis of what we were going to do later, and they've seen that we aren't doing it. The Colonel has got more out of the French than most people would have. Always been pleasant, genial, never lost his temper! What if he does take his stenog. on parties? It's none of our business. We ought to hold our eyes in the boat, try to keep it from rocking. I think he's a wonder, if you ask me."

"So do I," Anne said...

...

That afternoon she wrote a letter to Gerald Suydam. She wasn't

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going to marry anyone, she told him... Barry Caldwell watched her. Answering that feller,– damn him... Well, he could help her,– he reached for an envelope. 'O K' he wrote on its corner, as she folded her paper, 'B. Caldwell, 1st Lt., A.S., A.E.F.' He tossed it over. Watched her write 'Soldier's mail' where, in the other world, one used to put stamps. She sealed it.

"Thanks," she said...

...

It seemed to be happening all over again the next day. The Major tossed a letter. Anne picked it up. 'E. Tollet,' it said, where once you put stamps, 'Y.M.C.A., A.E.F.' Anne fingered it. She didn't dare,–

Across the broad desk, Barry Caldwell watched her. Couldn't help watching her... Had got a habit now, somehow, of watching her face... She tore the letter open. Barry Caldwell got up,– to keep himself from staring,– opened the generous window. June sun flooded warmly down across Anne's soft hair. She held the letter stiffly, gazing at it, gazing, gazing... Then she laid it down on the blotter, resting her elbows on the desk, her forehead on the open palms of her hands. He could not see her face now...

Anne looked down at Evelyn Tollet's clear, round handwriting. Writing, swimming... Must go on with it... Have to make one's mind work... One's mind, stiff... The words, swaying, swaying... '... have thought of you all the time since I heard of Geoffrey's death,' it said. Evelyn knew,– She was out there... 'The regiment was frightfully shot to pieces, but no one will be a greater loss than Geoffrey. There was a fine simplicity about him. Always ahead of his men... A soldier told me,–' She couldn't go on. Couldn't lift her own head. Geoffrey's forehead. The little cowlick where the hair curled upward... Her mother's thin hand stroking his forehead while she read... Her Mother ... How could she live through? And Josiah...

Barry Caldwell stood behind his chair, watching the bent head. He must not move... Must not disturb that silence... His muscles stiffened, twitching. It seemed an hour... And still she sat there, with her head down... She raised her head, at last. Her face had suddenly grown old, haggard... Her clear eyes met his.

"My brother... has been killed," she said, slowly. She got up, walked to the corner, reached for her hat. He came and stood behind her. Wanted to put his arms around her... Tell her... God, you coward! He put his hand down, very gently, on her shoulder. "Sorry," he mumbled, awkward. "Sorry... Sorry..." Christ, why was it that souls couldn't communicate except through bodies? That you couldn't tell her unless you touched her? Hold yourself, boy... Steady... He patted her shoulder, gently. Wondered if she'd mind it... She didn't... She just stood there, trying to say,– She couldn't say it... She walked away from him, out the door, down the long hall...

...

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Anne walked across the river. A dream... This had all happened before, somewhere, somehow... She had known all along that it was going to happen... The last two years had just been waiting, for this... Madame de Mourgues' door... Why had she come back? What was she going to do here?

She stood in the window of her room, looking out. Looking up, at the tall, steel spike of the Eiffel Tower. Spike made by modern civilization. Civilization that brought people up and crushed them...

Joan came in, panting, sent by Barry Caldwell. "Oh, Anne!" Tears in Joan's kind eyes... As she put her arm across your shoulder. "I was afraid so!" Anne did not say anything. Just stood, motionless, her grey eyes looking out the window... She had known, all along... Known... All along...

"I must send a cablegram," she said at last. She shut her eyes. The house at Downham... White gate, under the lilacs... Path leading up between the flowers to the green door... The living room... Her mother, with the tea things... Her mother, waiting... Waiting for Josiah to come home... Waiting for Anne... For Geoffrey... Anne turned from the window. Outside, the sunshine, and the Eiffel Tower ... In here, blackness... Darkness, closing in about you... She groped for the bed.

"You must go back, Joan," she said...

...

Mustn't lie here forever, like this, her head aching... Joan had gone back to the office... Had taken the cable for her mother... Had tried to make Anne eat... She couldn't eat. She hadn't any body any more, – just a soul, aching, aching... She must walk... Must get out somewhere, into the open, feel the wind...

She walked up the Avenue du Bois, out into the park. Easier to push away the agony swinging along like that... Yet, Geoffrey seemed all the time to be there, swinging beside her... It would take a long, long time to think of Geoffrey as dead... As nowhere,– gone out... His walking had been full of easy grace and beauty... And she had kept step beside him. All their lives, they had kept step. Dead... Geoffrey, dead... Ended... Snuffed out, like a candle. She would grow middle-aged, grow old. But Geoffrey would always stay young...

She walked on. Outside the Pré Catalan a party of Americans sat at a table drinking liqueurs. There were a navy officer, two aviators, and two Red Cross Girls,– everyone neat, tailored, chic, in uniforms and belts. They stood, and touched their glasses. Enjoying life... Young... Everyone young... That was why war was such an adventure, such a pleasant thrill,– the youth of all the world, together... For the last time...

Young, and then dead. Nothing between. No children, no old people, just Youth and Death. A generation throwing away its life for, – what? 'Something better's got to come out of it,' Geoffrey had said

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that last day, 'war's such an asinine way to fix things.' Something better must come. It must. The leaders of countries in this war were pledged to that. They couldn't let you down. '... it is our incumbent privilege to declare and stand for the rights of mankind,'– Wilson,– 'nothing else is worth fighting for...' Nothing else... A crusade against War...

Crusade, yet always human nature underneath it... The Colonel and Lettice. Drennan and Miss Brophy. Old Suarek. That negro killed 'as a result of his own misconduct' by his own side. Can nations be better than the people in them? Rise above nature? 'They're not all rotters, Anne,' Geoffrey had told her, 'if you could get out among the fighting troops you'd see...' She could see his eyes, looking ahead, serious, under his deep brows... O-Oh,– Steady,–

She must get out among the fighting troops. She had offered, in her cable, to go home. Her family would have to decide that. But if she didn't go, she must get out of Paris. Paris, with its plush armchairs, its mahogany desks, its lieutenants in their whipcords... Riding whips... Spurs, scratching desks... Its sergeants smoking cigarettes and eating candy. Its majors and its colonels. Its girls... Try to get somewhere where you'd be with soldiers. Try to see the side of it that Geoffrey had seen... Try to see beyond the perplexity, the futility of War... To be exalted by it...

In the path French children played, throwing a ball in the air, never catching it, but running to pick it up with little squeals. "René-é-é," a French woman called her little boy. "Viens vite! Nous n'avons pas beaucoup de temps..." Not much time before René too, with his slim, bare legs, would be caught in this Thing... War... She and Geoffrey had been little once, had played... 'Not much time...'

...

A bowl of fresh, pink roses stood in her room when she got home. A nice note from the Colonel, who sent, with the flowers, his sympathy, and told her not to come back until she felt entirely like it. Meantime they would all be thinking about her... Kind of the Colonel...

...

"Ah, Mademoiselle!" Madame de Mourgues' slim figure paused for a moment on the threshold. Long years of suffering in her eyes... "You have learned bad news!" She came swiftly, laid her thin hands on Anne's shoulders. Then she bent forward, quickly, and kissed Anne's forehead:

"Vous aussi, contribuez au grand sacrifice..."

...

A knock. Clémentine, with the hot water. She set the jug down. 'Mademoiselle a de la peine," she said quickly. "Ah, je sais bien ce que Mademoiselle ressent. Moi aussi, je sais!" [1]

...

[1] 'Mademoiselle suffers. Ah, I know what Mademoiselle feels. I, too, know!'

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Dinner. Rather silent tonight... Sympathy, unspoken... The old ladies of the pension had patted her shoulder, kindly. The jeunes filles gazed at her. But in France, when one lost a relative, one wore black... Very becoming, le deuil, but here was Mees Ventvort in the same clothes... Mr. Colt sat next her, kind, sympathetic. 'You'll let me know if there's anything I can do,' he'd said, as they came in. Now he was talking, quietly, of other things, to make the time pass. Knowing she couldn't listen...

'They are superb, these Americans.' It was the old Commandant, opposite, talking between gulps. 'Magnifiques! They have no training, yet they can fight! They are young! They are enthousiastes! One says they capture machine guns in broad daylight.'

Anne looked up. Taking a machine gun... Geoffrey...

...

Night... Anne watched Rosalind, standing tall and white, by the light before she put it out. Trying to think of one more thing to do before she made the room dark. Rosalind, sleeping there with her so she should not be alone. Joan, gone to the hospital to take Anne's place. Nice of them both... But nothing could keep away the horror...

Darkness. Geoffrey, out there alone... Geoffrey, lying somewhere, suffering perhaps, alone... Geoffrey, going, with no one to say goodbye... Geoffrey's face... His clean, long hands... Geoffrey's forehead, with the brown hair, curling... Her mother's fingers... She lay, motionless, awake... Would never sleep... Never...

"Anne," Rosalind whispered in the dark. Rosalind had been lying very still. "I'm coming over near you. I'm going to push my bed." The slim figure in white pushed and tugged, moving the heavy bedstead. Darkness. Good to have someone lying near you... Someone who knew... To feel the clasp of Rosalind's cool hand...

"I'm keeping you awake..."

"Never mind," said Rosalind.

Outside the night wore on.

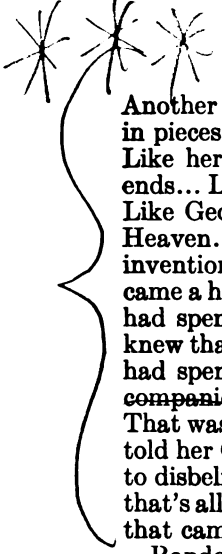
"Mother will never sleep again," said Anne...

...

Morning. The tall spike of the Eiffel Tower reached up to the full sun. Sunlight slanting against the red brick of buildings across the court. An American officer, in a sunny window, taking his bath, as he did each day. The courtyard below would be cool and green and damp in early shadow. Summer. War. Geoffrey... Geoffrey, dead. One had forgotten. Sleep had blotted it out for just an hour. But it was true. True... Part of life, gone...

It had been Rosalind, creeping toward the door, opening it softly, that had waked her. Rosalind, quiet, trying not to wake her... Presently Joan would have forgotten something, and would come in to find it... All being careful of her... All starting on another day...

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Another day, to be lived through somehow... Life, then, could be cut in pieces, like a string, and the two pieces would never fit together... Like hers... Yesterday morning, and this morning, the string's two ends... Life, that mattered, could be snuffed out, and disappear... Like Geoffrey's... Thank goodness nobody had said anything about Heaven... There wasn't any... They all knew that... Heaven was an invention of old people... People who had clung long to life till it became a habit... People who did not want to change their habits... Who had spent lives together, and could not bear to part them... Youth knew that they were throwing their lives on a great Junk Heap... They had spent lonely lives, most of them, except for brave moments of companionship that they had snatched at... They could die alone... That was what everyone thought,– the way they lived... No one had told her God was good... They had found out he wasn't... Had grown to disbelieve in the old Christian Father... There is the Universe, and that's all... The stars... And Man... And the Great Question... Death, that came suddenly, and put the whole thing out...

Randolph might die tomorrow, today. Terrible that she had not told Rosalind that he was there. Yet, he had said he hoped she wouldn't come... God, suppose it was already too late? Must go out to the hospital today and fix that up. Life was too short for any corner of the truth to stay unspoken... Yet,– Amélie... Rosalind must not know. There were some things that only people who had lived through all the parts of war could know... Joan came in,– hunting for something in a drawer.

"Thank the Colonel, Joan, and tell him I'll be back tomorrow," Anne said.

"Oh, you're awake. Look, have you got a collar anywhere? It's getting frightfully late and I can't find one."

"Top drawer," said Anne. "It's Rosalind's. She's got plenty." She watched Joan hitch the collar.

"Le déjeuner, Mademoiselle!" Clémentine set the tray down. You went on, living...

...

The corridor at the hospital was full of beds again. They had been cleared out once, and here they were back. New patients, men with sunburned faces, dirty strong hands. Men not yet used to being ill. A man in a bed in the corner of the corridor was looking at her. A face, vaguely familiar... Reminding her of music. 'Joan of Arc, tee deedle de dum, Joan of Arc, te deedle de dum...'

"Halt, who goes there!" the man said. Anne stopped. Why, he was,– 'Hello,' she shook hands,– his left hand. The other was gone,– "Say, wasn't you at Bordeaux?" said the man. "Say, do you remember the time you run down a French cop on your bicycle one night, and he was for arrestin' you because you had no light? 'N' you led him round the corner and found an M.P. ..."

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"And the M.P. bawled him out good and proper and sent me on. Sure I remember."

"I was the guy. I was out to the hospital at Saint-Ignaz, too, doin' guard duty. Used to halt you on your way home nights. We done somethin' else than guard duty since then, I'll tell the world! Up to this place they call Vaux, fightin' like Hell to get a dirty, God-forsaken dump that'd be better if they could just pile the dirt up over it 'n' leave it. Tryin' to capture a burg named Chateau-Theery that the French was in once, and got out of. Swimmin' in that damned, dirty little creek there. Say, 'member that guy, de Lancey? Runnin' errands for you he was, one time. Kind of a French lookin' guy that the boys called 'Alphonse.'"

"Yes, of course. I used to know his sister." Would she forget that day that Jim de Lancey had come, from the G.U. Ward, to,—

"He's a captain now. Bravest damn fool in the comp'ny, he wuz. Took five men with him, and the whole outfit swum across the creek, an' policed up on three machine guns, and him an' one other soldier come back drivin' ten Heinies. That night the Cap'n got wounded,—all the lieutenants had been bumped off a'ready,— What does Sergeant de Lancey do? He just steps up and takes command of the whole damn comp'ny and curses 'em to Hell this way and that way, an' makes 'em go on. We met some Frawgs a comin' back, and he turned them around, too. Say, he certainly can yell at them Frawgs!"

"I believe his ancestors were French," Anne said.

"I don't believe it," said the soldier...

...

Anne went to the French ward. Same pale, patient faces... Same tubes of Dakin solution to be turned on. She stopped. The bed that Randolph had been in was empty... She gripped the foot of the next bed. "My God!"

"On l'a emmené d'ici. Dans une autre chambre, Mademoiselle. Là-bas, là-bas." [1] The little Frenchman in the next bed was talking to her. He was smiling. Tiens! He had discovered a romance as he lay there! This must be the bonne amie who had sent so many flowers, while the wounded pilote in the next bed was quite unconscious... Paté de foie gras, caviar, when the wounded pilote could eat nothing,— the poilu and his comrades had found them good, delicious. Not often that one assisted thus at a little drama here in the hospital... Habitually one did not amuse oneself so much... "Dans une petite chambre, tout seul," he added. This Américaine was trembling, one could feel the trembling of the bed coming from her hands... "Très malade, lui!" [2]

"Merci beaucoup." She was gone.

[1] 'One has taken him away from here. In another room, Miss. Down that way.'

[2] 'In a little room, all alone. Very sick, that one!'

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"A-a-h! Je suis malin, moi," [1] chuckled the little Frenchman...

...

Anne found a small, bare room, with white walls, high up under the gables. The light from the window fell on a bunch of flowers on the table,– pink roses, pale yellow marguerites, blue larkspur. On the bed lay a long figure, looking out from under the bandage with one eye. Anne went and stood beside him, took his hand. "Anne!" A tired look in the one eye... The dash, the humor, the little streak of craziness that had been Randolph, quite gone... The lips, where he had worn a moustache, were clean-shaven, swollen, and at the left side the red end of a scar ran down. Only the jaw bone of this man looked like Randolph. "How did you get to come here?" he was saying.

"I've been here before, but you didn't know me." He looked at her a minute under the overhanging bandage. Almost too much effort for him, to talk...

"I don't seem to know much, Anne. I can't remember how I came here, or anythin'." His southern accent was strong, as it had been when he first came to Downham, long ago, with Geoffrey, home from college... Only three years, measured in days and nights, ago, that...

"Don't try," said Anne. "It isn't worth remembering."

"I can remember goin' to some place up north in a truck, and not much else. What have I been doin' all this time, Anne?"

"It would be hard to tell," Anne said. She smiled a little...

"It sure is good to see you, Anne!" Randolph said slowly. "I certainly do get lonesome, lyin' here."

"Those flowers," said Anne. "Aren't they lovely! Where did they come from?"

"The nurse brings 'em. Take one. Take 'em all, won't you?"

"Oh Randolph, that's sweet of you. I believe I will..." She rose and picked the vase up.

"Don't go," he pleaded. His fingers clung to her hand. "Anne, honey, I get so lonely! And I'd like to talk to you about... about... Geoff... and your mother... and... and..." He was getting tired. Anne drew her hand away.

"I'll come again," she said...

...

"Listen," Anne stopped the nurse outside in the corridor. "You're on that case in there?"

"Yes, why?" The nurse was in a hurry. No time of day for folks to come and visit... "He's been awful bad, but he's better now," she added. "Not quite right in his head yet." She turned, to walk off,–

"Wait a second," Anne said. "I want to tell you something. He's engaged."

"Well, that's nothin' to me," the nurse snapped. Some folks thought

[1] 'Ah, I'm a sly fox, me!'

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you was always tryin' to catch the patients... She wished this woman would get out, let her go about her business. She had four bed pans...

"These flowers," Anne went on. "I've been sending them to him, see? He's not engaged to me. He's just a friend of mine. Now his fiancée's come to be an aide here in the hospital. She's coming up to see him this afternoon. If any more things come for him,– I've left some money at some shops to send them,– you just take them and give them to somebody else, will you? See?"

"Ye-ah, I *see!* Trust me! So you're Ammilly, are you? He was talkin' an awful lot about Ammilly before he came to. Seems to have forgot her since."

Anne smiled. "No, I'm not Amélie. Whoever she is, if she comes round, keep her out, too."

"Sure," said the nurse.

"Thanks." Anne went off down the corridor. The nurse stood a minute, looking after her. She raised her eyebrows slightly.

"Say, I guess there was more than one of 'em," she said...

...

Anne left the flowers with the little Frenchman. The Americans did not care especially for flowers,– the front, it seemed, was covered thick with flowers. 'Seen enough o' them,' one wounded soldier told her, 'when I was layin' in them God damned daisies...'

...

The rue Marbeuf. Heat, wavering from the sidewalk, making little wiggles against the white walls. What would Amélie Delsart say when she told her? Anne walked on, looking for the number she had given. Safer to tell her... She might write to Randolph... Might come to see him in the visiting hour Sunday... Anne stopped before a door. She didn't like to do this...

...

Up the mysterious stairs of a French apartment house. White stone stairs, with an iron rail, very clean, very respectable, these stairs. Doors, closed mysteriously. France remained hidden, behind closed doors, drawn shutters, high walled gardens. 'Au premier' the concierge had said. Here was the premier. Anne pulled a shining handle. Inside, somewhere, a bell clanged. Horrid, this waiting... She stood, mopping her forehead. The day was hot. Shuffling, padded footsteps on the inside... The door opened, narrowly, a crack. A woman with dark hair, parted in the middle, brushed slickly down, looked out. She had on a black apron, black felt slippers. The femme de chambre,–

"Mademoiselle Delsart est chez elle?"

"Oui, Madame."

"Elle,– elle est seule?"

"Mais oui! Elle est seule!" Indignation. The old woman threw the door open. Who was this strange young person, in large shoes,

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who dared to suspect that her mistress would not be alone? "Entrez, Madame! I shall go and announce to Mademoiselle that there is a person who wishes..." She shuffled off. Disappeared through a closed, panelled door.

"Entrez, Mademoiselle!" That voice of silver sleigh bells... Amélie Delsart threw the panelled doors wide open. Seemed to drift forward, in something blue and gold, that clung against her body, floating, gracious. The straw-colored hair waving smooth back from the low forehead as Anne had seen it at the Opéra on that first night. Her long, white hand, with its great ring on the forefinger, was held out. She led Anne to the salon. The perfume of lilies... "Asseyez-vous là, Mademoiselle." She patted the soft cushion of a bergère. "Ah, no, Mademoiselle, you will be better here. I have been drinking my coffee near the window. Comme il fait chaud aujourd'hui! Berthe!" The silvery voice called after the stout femme de chambre, "Another cup for Mademoiselle. Or perhaps you would prefer tea? The English like tea.'

"I am not English." Anne sank into the soft chair. Would have felt better, somehow, on that straight one... The room was cool and large, filled with a half light that sifted upward through closed shutters. Bowls of lilies stood by the tall windows, their dim reflection shining on the parquet floor. On the marble mantel, Sèvres jars filled with tall fronds of larkspur. Figures of porcelaine de Saxe, a clock, supported by small china cupids. The backs of these reflected dimly in the high mirror that half hid, half showed a room of mystery beyond it. Anne stared at a Louis XVI table, with its jardinière filled with blue larkspur, yellow marguerites, pink roses. Stared at her own dusty shoes against the smooth floor. A place of coolness, comfort, shut away from the hot glow of the street beyond the closed blinds. Filled with the scent of lilies...

"No, happily you are not English," Amélie Delsart was saying. Long, turquoise earrings trembled against the swan-like neck. "Happily you are American and you are in France! One tells me that the Americans are fighting like lions along the Marne,– that they will save Paris. Vous devez être fière d'être Américaine en ce moment, Mademoiselle! And your brother? You have news?" Her dark eyes narrowed under the long, waxed lashes as she listened. It was as though it hurt her. "Ah! How many times I have seen it," she whispered. "So many brave men who are dead that France might live!" Anne looked at her. That the world might be safe,– But this woman wouldn't understand that...

"I have come to tell you of Randolph Pendleton," she said.

"Yes? And he? He?" Amélie Delsart leaned forward, eager. Elbows on the arms of the bergère, long sleeves, drooping, lying on the smooth floor... White fingers crossed... Her lovely face above them, turned toward Anne, waiting...

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"He's better. But he can't remember,– anything that has happened since he's been in France. He talks about things at home, things that happened long ago, before we came,–"

"Yes, that is natural after a blow like that. But it will grow better. Soon he will begin to recollect, very slowly. I have heard of similar cases. He does not yet remember me, sans doute. It is that that you would say, Mademoiselle?"

"I don't think he remembers you," said Anne. Amélie Delsart leaned back against the soft chair, her white hands drooping. She crossed one long, slender leg over the other, the toe of the dull, gold slipper moving just a little. The soft, blue and gold stuff drifting from the long curves of her body, and lying on the floor about her. Someone must have painted those fantastic patterns on the soft crêpe... "Eh, bien, Mademoiselle, what do you want me to do?"

"There is something else," Anne paused. If only one could say all this in English... It would not matter so much if one were crude in English. "Randolph, before he left America, was,– fiancé. He was going to marry my cousin. My cousin is here, now, in Paris. She is a nurse at the hospital where he is." Anne watched Amélie Delsart's eyes grow narrow. The white fingers gripping the chair's arms... Eyes closing... Red lips parting just a little... Her face up, as if she waited for someone to hit her...

"Ah, le moment est venu!" she whispered. Anne traced the pattern with her finger on the pale green damask of the bergère. Hateful to hurt people... "I knew that one day I should give him up," said Amélie Delsart. "He is so beautiful, so intelligent, so brave... I have loved him, Mademoiselle! You do not believe me! Vous croyez, sans doute, que c'est son argent que je voulais. Ce n'est pas vrai. Je l'aime.[1] What I did,"– the fair head tossed back, "I did for his own sake, and for France."

"I know," said Anne, "he told me."

"But tell me, Mademoiselle, your cousin, is she going to make him happy? Randolph has the soul of an artist! Does she appreciate the things he loves,– music, art? Does she appreciate the Beautiful?"

"I don't know," said Anne, "but she loves Randolph."

"Ah! That is not all that matters." She leaned forward, her elbows on her knees, one white hand dangling, the end of her long sleeve against her ankle. "Love is one thing. But happiness in marriage is another. Love does not last forever. But in America one does not marry except for love, is it not so?"

"Yes."

"And if one falls in love with someone with whom one is,– is mal assorti, with whom one has not tastes in common, who perhaps is not

[1] 'You think, no doubt, that it was his money that I wanted. This is not so. I love him.'

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of the same world, or someone who is not enough rich to found a hearth?"

"One marries him just the same," said Anne. "We think that love is the only thing that matters..."

"Ah, and I too!" Amélie Delsart's dark eyes flashed. "It is for that that I remain unmarried. To marry, without love, with the hope that love will come later, as one does it in France, and then, after one is tied to one man, to encounter another whom one could have truly loved,– that is intolerable. Or to make a marriage of love, as it happens in America, and later to see love fade, to see one's husband become calm, indifferent,– that also is impossible, revolting. And in America a man is tied to his wife, is he not? She must,– she must, – A man may not take a mistress,– even when, between him and his wife there is no love, is it not so?"

"Yes, that is so," said Anne. "But sometimes, in America, husband and wife are very happy." She had not come here to discuss Life with this woman. And yet she could not keep her eyes from the gestures of those eloquent, white hands...

"En France aussi! But if this arrives, at the end of several years, it is not love that is the cause of it. It is because they are good comrades. In France one recognizes that marriage lasts, but that love does not last. One founds marriage on a principle which is greater than passion. One picks out two young people who have tastes in common, who are of the same world, who have money enough to found a hearth. They marry, they have children. Sometimes they fall deeply in love with one another. Then they are happy, and after love passes, they have their family, their common interests. Or sometimes it is only the woman who falls in love. In that case, she suffers. Or perhaps she is not in love. In that case, too, she suffers. In France, for the well-being of the family, one sacrifices the happiness of women. Pour moi," Amélie Delsart rose, tossed the fair head back, stood, tall and straight before the mantel. "I will not be sacrificed!" she said. The blue and gold hung from her shoulders, coiling itself at her feet, brushing against the tall jar of white lilies. The scent of lilies,– "You Americans," the white chin up, "you struggle for an ideal. That which you wish were true, you believe to be true. You are not logical, like us. You establish marriage upon love, and you believe that love is eternal, n'est-ce-pas? You cling to the illusion that a man never ceases to desire passionately his wife. Mademoiselle, I do not believe, truly, that your men are so different from our men! It is not the impression that they have given me here in Paris. And if your marriages make themselves under the vibrating influence of passion, is there the least certainty of happiness? Two very young people, passionately in love,– how can they make a reasonable choice?"

"It must be luck," said Anne.

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"Ah, voilà!" Eyebrows, shoulders raised... "But tell me of,– cette jeune fille, votre cousine, qui va épouser Randolph. Can she make his life happy,– complete? He is an artist. To the bottom of his soul, he is an artist. It is necessary that the woman who shall marry him should understand, when his love for her declines, that she must never stand in his way. Qu'elle lui laisse la bride sur le cou!"

Amélie Delsart looked down for a moment at the toe of her shoe, the dim light shining on the pale gold hair as her head bent. This dumb young woman, the cousin of his wife, might one day help him... "Now that he is wounded, he will be leaving," she said. "It is the end of his adventure in France. It will not have been in vain. He has learned to live. To live dangerously, in the search for Beauty,– that which is the essence itself of the life of an artist. He is not a man who will love only one woman. Votre cousine, sait-elle tout cela? Le comprendra-t-elle?"

"I hope so," said Anne. Perhaps, after all, it would be better for him to marry,– Anne's mind jumped. America... Some small town in the south,– and this tall figure in the blue and gold dress... "But you, Mademoiselle, perhaps,–"

"As to me, Mademoiselle, I must remain free!" Cords of the white neck tightening as the proud head went back. "I have made my choice. To live with a man, after love goes, is not possible for me. While love lasts, what joy in living, what reserves of energy one finds hidden in oneself! To live a life ennobled by the radiant beauty of love! That is the great joy. But to be tied to a man who no longer loves you,– Bah! Mieux vaut rester libre!" Anne stood up. You couldn't answer this stuff... Not in French... "But I have tired you!" The resolution, the hard, fine steel that seemed to stiffen the white neck softened. She smiled. "You do not understand these things, Mademoiselle. You, who wait, so proud, so severe, for love to come,– for a miracle to happen. It is not a miracle, Mademoiselle! A physical thing,– quite natural,–"

"Yes," said Anne, moving toward the door, "I understand."

"You will not need to tell Randolph, Mademoiselle. I have often told him that I should disappear before the day when love cooled. He will perceive that I have told the truth. He will remember me, and he will learn that I am gone. You are too good, Mademoiselle, to have come to speak to me thus! You have courage! You are like your compatriots who fight along the Marne." Amélie Delsart moved forward, held out her white hand. Beyond the shepherdesses, the cupids, the larkspur in the mirror, Anne could see the tall sweep of her straight back. "Au revoir," she said. Anne took the white hand, dropped it, turned to the door. Couldn't tell this woman that you respected sheer nerve... A race horse, game to the last post... Impossible, when you were worked up, to talk French...

"Ecoutez, Mademoiselle!" She had walked back. She stood, her

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shoulders against the marble of the mantel, hands clasped behind her. Light from the hot street reflected dimly through the shutters shone, pale green, on the smooth hair... "You can remind him on my part," she said slowly,– the dark eyes narrowed, under the fringe of lashes,– "that in France it is the custom that the men bow first..."

...

The street. June sunshine, hot, baking the pavement... French houses, gleaming yellow... Balconies... Long, open windows. Beyond those windows? Were there more salons, filled with the scent of lilies? Filled with the presence of a woman? Hair of greenish, pale gold... Anne turned into the Champs-Elysées. The city, sultry, in the afternoon heat... The Arc de Triomphe, rising, grand, against the sun there... Beyond it, trees in the Avenue de la Grande Armée. Must hurry to get to the hospital before Rosalind got through... Walk fast... Get hot... Make oneself feel better... Feel more normal... The Porte Maillot. One could not forget the smell of lilies... Green light, shining on pale gold hair...

...

Rosalind was bending over a patient, smoothing his sheets, patting his pillow, saying good night. Through the crack of the half open door, Anne watched her. Patience about those slender shoulders under the blue gingham... That neat, slender waist, with its white apron. A gentle prettiness in the curly, dark hair, under the white cap. The soldiers' eyes followed her as she bent over each one, straightening them, tucking the sheets. 'Good night, nurse!' they were calling... "Be good, until tomorrow!" she said laughing, turning, coming through the ward door. "Anne, dear, what are you doing?" Rosalind stood there, startled. Anne stood, looking at her. Pretty eyes, with their soft, upturned lashes. Her oval face, so gentle, so sweet... Her simple blue and white,– so different from that blue and gold with its fantastic pattern... When you were young, wanted to taste Life quickly before Death caught you,– Amélie... But if you were hurt, and ill and old, and wanted tending... If you were wounded, sent home,– Rosalind,– surely... Here she was, waiting for you to say something. Anne took her arm and walked along the hallway.

"Found something upstairs I think you'd like to –"

"Anne darling, what? Who?" Rosalind's hand, trembling...

"Randolph. He's here. He's wounded." A clumsy way of doing it... How could you soften things that weren't soft? "He's getting well. He's all right, old top. Listen, whatever you do, don't cry." They walked on, up the stairway. "You've got to be calm," said Anne, "and get him through this. His head was hurt, and his shoulder, his leg,– a bad infection. He can't remember about the last six months. You mustn't ask him. Just pick up where you left off, the doctor says that's best..." The French ward. Rosalind's hand trembling. A nurse

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turning her head, and looking at them. Randolph's door. Anne dropped Rosalind's arm, went in alone. "Randolph," gently.

He opened drowsy eyelids: "Anne, honey, stay with me a little, will you? I get so lonesome..." Anne turned and beckoned.

"Rosalind will stay with you a little, Randolph. She's come." Rosalind, dropping to her knees beside the white bed... Anne turned, and walked quickly through the French ward...

...

She tiptoed to the door an hour after. It stood, half open. Not a sound. Rosalind must have gone, then... But no, there she was, still kneeling... "Time to go along," Anne whispered.

"Yes. Yes." Rosalind got up. She bent and kissed him. For a moment, stood there, beside him, his fingers through hers.

"Ros, darling, you're remindin' me of someone," he said, slowly, "but I can't for the life of me think who it is..."

...

The office. It seemed a month or two since Anne had been there... The Major, very kind, gripping Anne's hand. Barry Caldwell, not there. 'Ordered to the Intelligence Service in the S.O.S.,' the Major, saying... "He didn't get to the front, then?" "Nope. Who does?"

The Colonel came in, shook Anne's hand, patting her shoulder gently. Everyone trying to be pleasant to her... Trying to make her forget the black cloud, that hovered. The Colonel, sitting on the edge of her desk, talking: "You know,–" The Colonel looked round,– no one in sight. "You know, it was an experiment up there where your brother was fighting. The Allies, all winter, have been working to get our troops brigaded in with their divisions,– replacing their losses. They didn't believe our men could fight by themselves. But Pershing has been sticking out all along for the American Army fighting by itself, and using open warfare. Said they could do it. Up there at Cantigny, I believe the French were giving him the chance to prove it. They handed him a salient that they had been trying to take for a long time. They told him to go ahead, and show 'em. The First Division showed 'em." The Colonel nodded, smiling. Must show this girl it wasn't all for nothing... "They turned the trick. They've made it possible for us to finish this war –"

"Yes." Anne sat, her two hands holding the desk, gazing at the blotter. At what cost had they done it...

"What I want you to know is, that it's a bigger thing than it looks. It means more than getting that bit of ground. It means a whole lot in the morale of the Allied armies. It means that Pershing's faith in the American doughboy's vindicated. It's a great thing to have taken those doughboys over the top, Miss Wentworth!" Anne blinked her tears back. A great thing... Death... The Scrap Heap... Perhaps... Perhaps... If it had brought the End near... If it would end War,

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then,– Ought to thank the Colonel,– Such a kind man... A lump in your throat...

"That action up there was a long step toward the end," he said. "Those fellers showed the stuff that they were made of. They won our chance. It's our men today who are keeping the Germans out of Paris. God knows what'll happen up there on the Marne, but whatever happens, there are nigh onto a million Americans in France this minute. And they'll keep right on coming till there are ten million, if it needs ten million. The Germans'll see that, and when they see it, they'll crack."

"Thank you," Anne choked. "Thank you."

"And tomorrow," the Colonel slid down from the desk. Nearly ten,– the officers must all be waiting for him at the meeting... Kind of him to stop here, to talk to her... "Tomorrow the first D.H. 4 with a Liberty motor is arriving at Avency-le-Sec." He waved his hand above his head as if he held a flag there.

"Good," said Anne, "good! I'm so glad..." He hurried off. She sat a moment, with her head bent in her hands. 'A great step toward the end.' The End,– 'The future peace and security of the world.' 'Nothing else is worth fighting for.' They showed the stuff that we were made of... Geoffrey... His long, thin hands... His forehead, with the hair curling up at the side... A bullet through his forehead... Geoffrey... Geoffrey... That black cloud, falling,– Must try to work ... Must hold on... Must not go to pieces... Anne turned to her typewriter.

...

"We're going to the front." Rose and Rosalie came in, excited, talking. Trying to help her drive away the black cloud... They lit cigarettes, and perched on chair arms. 'The General's been put in command of all the Air Forces in the Zone of Advance.' 'Afraid he wouldn't take us...' 'But he'd have to, you see Rosalie files his papers and no one else can find them. Why only the other day, he went to Chaumont, and when he got there, he couldn't find the very one he wanted,– she had to go up.' 'Getting ourselves lovely uniforms, at Jacquin's on the rue de la Paix.' 'You see, riding in the General's Cadillac...' 'My, but it'll be nice to get away from Paris,–' 'Somehow you can't help going out every night when you're in Paris, can you?'

"No, somehow you can't," Anne said.

...

"Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle!" Clémentine met Anne, all excitement when she came home to lunch. Clémentine had a one-armed suitor now, her morale had gone up... "There is a lady who sleeps in the room of Mademoiselle," she said. "She has not even removed her shoes. Oh, la, la!"

A woman lay, asleep, dressed in the grey-green uniform of the

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Y.M.C.A., one hand flung back across the pillow, the other holding her hat. It was as if she had just sat down, and fallen backwards. Her breath came peacefully, in, out, in, out. She did not stir. Something familiar in her face,– oh, yes, the girl from Iowa who'd been with Evelyn Tollet. Anne drew a blanket over her.

"Let her sleep," she said to Clémentine. "She's tired..."

...

The Colonel was going to make a speech at four o'clock in the courtyard. Anne stood there, waiting. French girls came, trooping out through the door, and stood there, giggling. Didn't realize there *were* so many girls here... 'What do they do?' she asked Brock. 'Oh, they make copies.' The girls remarked on each lieutenant as he came out. Barnaby, in light grey whipcords, his eyes evasive, furtive. 'Ah, voilà le bon Bébé,' said a girl next Anne. 'En voilà un héros, un brave!' The girl next her gave a little shriek of laughter. It was hot. The window into the guard-room above their heads, stood open. In the broad window, Lettice appeared, cool, pretty, in a summer dress of spotted silk that fluttered. Lettice, growing stouter, growing almost portly... Perhaps too many lunches... Perhaps,– Lind, his belt and buckles shining, riding whip waving, motioned a guard to fetch a chair for Lettice. The Colonel, tired, smiling. Lettice sat down, in the open window, looked out. 'Voilà sa poule! Oh, la! la!' The French girl next Anne giggled.

The Colonel turned toward the window, smiling. A shout, a burst of hand-clapping in the courtyard... Anne, clapping, with the rest... 'Vive le Colonel!' A shrill voice... The applause doubled. He stepped out onto a little roof below the window. He coughed. A tired man, smiling, rather like a young boy... The French girls in the courtyard looked up at him. 'There isn't one of us at these Headquarters,'– he took a step forward, found himself. He knew there wasn't one of us here who wouldn't prefer to go to the front tomorrow than to stay here. The lieutenants shifted... The thing we had to remember, back here, was, that those who worked in Paris were fighting the war too... That we, too, were doing our bit to save civilization... He looked down, solemn. Then he tossed his head back,– the smile,– He wanted to thank them. Thank them for the hard, conscientious work they had been doing. Wanted to ask them to keep it up, and see the thing through! Wanted to tell them that they all deserved a holiday, and that tomorrow was the fourth of July, and that there would be no work at these Headquarters,– roars of applause,– he thanked them! Thunderous clapping. 'Vive le Colonel!' Shrill voices... 'Bravo!' Hand-clapping... People turning to go...

In the window, Lettice and the Colonel standing, shaking hands with officers. Lettice turning, smiling down at the jostling crowd below her... A little strand of curly hair blowing forward against her fair cheek as she stood there... Anne stood, looking up at her a moment.

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Suddenly the smile on her face faded...

...

The girl from Iowa lay on the bed, still in the same position. She opened her eyes. "What time is it?" she asked.

"Six o'clock."

"Six o'clock today or, or,– tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow," Anne laughed. "Where did you drop from?"

"Came down from Meaux. My Division's up at Château-Thierry. We set up a feeding station where the ambulances were stopping on the way down. Made soup in camp kettles, and gave 'em soup and crackers and drinks of water. Their supplies got cut off somehow before they started the advance. They said they hadn't had water for twenty-four hours, nor food, except a cracker or two, for a day and a half before they went over. They hate that,– getting killed on empty stomachs." The girl lay, gazing out the window. "Is it Tuesday," she said, "or is it Wednesday? I've had about three hours' sleep in three nights. It makes you feel queer. You don't mind my coming, do you? The hotels were all full and I was afraid I'd go to sleep in the street. What are you doing now?"

"I work when the General comes to town," said Anne. "Otherwise I just sit."

"Why don't you come out in the mud?" the girl asked. "That's where people really need you in this war. Come with me tomorrow to Headquarters. They'll give you a job."

"I believe I will," said Anne...

...

There was to be a great parade. Madame de Mourgues hurried early through the hallway. From the Commandant, she had seats on one of the tribunes for herself, and the Marquise and the Comtesse. Curious, the Marquise remarked to Madame, that the Américaines should sit so tranquil in their beds, drinking their coffee. Was it not their own jour de fête? One of the Avenues of Paris to be named for Wilson, the saviour of the whole world? The ladies, talking rapidly, passed through the hall. They would attrap a taxi... Une folie,– mais enfin, it would save shoes...

Anne and Joan and the girl from Iowa lit cigarettes and lay against their pillows. 'Wonderful.' 'Like to stay here all day.' 'Still, I suppose we better see this show.' They got up, washed in their basins, plunged into the bathtub's perpetual cold water. "Il faut vous dépêcher, Mesdemoiselles!" Clémentine came in, all agitation. Their beds to make, and her bon ami already waiting for her near the kiosk... "The gendarmes are already barring the streets." The young ladies slowly adjusted their military ties before the mirror.

"I suppose we'd better take some papers and things to show them," Anne said.

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Paris en fête. Paris, eager, shining... A cool breeze that caught the American flags, the French tricolors, fluttering them before the buildings... French people, carrying stepladders, adjusting them with difficulty, climbing on them... People, with their families, who had waited all night... Anne and Joan Porter and the girl from Iowa stepped up to a gendarme who barred the crossing. "Armée Américaine," they said.

"Passez, Mesdames! Passez!" The little blue cape flapped, the rope was lifted. Another rope, guarded by a little man in a black golf cape. They did not want to derange him, Anne explained, but this lady had just come from Meaux,– "Passez, Mesdames! Passez!" The little man waved his arm. Was it not the Americans along the Marne who had saved Paris? They walked on. They waved to Madame de Mourgues and the Marquise and the Comtesse on their tribune. Those ladies chattered, rapidly to one another. These Américaines had no tickets at all,– of that Madame la Marquise was quite certain. She herself had that of them asked last night at dinner. Yet, there they were, directing themselves straight to the Main Tribune... No respect for the rules, these Americans... Madame de Mourgues smiled: 'It is perhaps because they have no respect for rules that they save Paris...'

A gendarme with a sword stood at the gate of the Main Tribune. "Only pink tickets pass here!" The girl from Iowa turned to an American M.P. "Get us in," she said...

"You bet! Come along with me!" The boy laughed. "I'll knock you down to Charlie Chaplin himself!" The French Chief of Police was short, dark, with small moustache, clad in gold braid. "Shake hands with these American ladies, Chief," said the M.P. "Place. Entray. Compris?" The little man shook their hands. He bounded ahead of them, talking, rapidly... To the gendarme at the gate he waved a brave arm. "Laissez passer!" So, they were in.

They looked round. André, the Colonel's chauffeur, made a low bow. It was by a 'grand salut' he said, that he had entered. Brock was there, with Madame Vidon, all cordiality, all hand-shakes,– would they, then, not sit next her? Her white hair shone smooth under her crêpe veil. An American Express check, Brock explained, had landed them here... And there was the Colonel, way over there in front, with Lettice,– they had tickets. Everyone talking. Everyone pleased, excited. And in the grandstand opposite, the big wigs were arriving... 'Vive Papa Joffre!' Madame Vidon, leapt to her feet, waving wildly. Anne looked where the thin, work-worn finger pointed. That portly, benign old gentleman,– had he once saved France? Lloyd George, just like his pictures, grey hat, straggly moustache, hands resting on a cane between his bent knees. A shout went up,– a shout not like the others. A short, stout man in black climbed the steps quickly. The short man lifted his hat with a grey-

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gloved hand. He leaned over, shook hands with Lloyd George. 'Vive Clémenceau!' The crowd yelled. He turned, looked down. Old... Old as the hills... Older... Anne gazed at him. How could he run a war, this old, old man? And yet, not old... Young! His eyes,– Flashing... Ageless... Deathless... A fire that would never burn out in those black eyes...

A band was playing 'The Star-Spangled Banner.' Everyone rising, standing at attention. A short, plain, little man arriving, climbing to the tribune beside Clémenceau, 'L'ambassadeur des Etats-Unis.' A lump, rising in Anne's throat. Silly... Nationalism... Nationalism all wrong... It led to wars... And yet,– Her mother and father, Geoffrey, Downham, the river in the sun, the clean, sweet woods,– all these things crowding on you, trying to make you cry here... The big wigs making speeches... Nobody could hear them... The big wigs shaking hands, congratulating one another on their speeches... Old men...

Down the Avenue a firm, brown line, came marching. Men in khaki. Young men. Men with serious, clear eyes that looked ahead, as if they were watching something a long way off... Americans... The lump, coming again, in your throat. French cavalry, twelve abreast, with sabres drawn, gay, debonair, smiling right and left. Catching flowers that women tossed to them, sticking them behind their ears and grinning. Trumpets, fanfares, blares of sound. Then more Americans, helmets, mud-spattered, down across their foreheads, hollow eyes, tired, pale faces. 'Say, this is the infantry from Chateau-Theery,' Brock was saying. Great spaces between them. 'Open ranks for the ones that got hit.' White beds, in the hospital,– Anne filled the gaps in,– men writhing, groping in the darkness... And here, these others, marching, looking neither to the right nor left, but always forward... The girl from Iowa gripped Anne's arm. "My regiment! Just look at the holes!" she whispered.

'Vive l'Amérique!' Women throwing flowers, crying. Waving at marching men, who looked to neither one side nor the other. 'Les braves petits gars! Comme ils sont sérieux!' 'Ah, les pauvres petits!' Madame Vidon had seized Anne's arm, was pulling herself up by it to stand on her chair. Poilus of France next. Small, old men, in faded blue, walking with short steps, not keeping step... Tall, spiky bayonets, making them look smaller... Tired men, with merry, cheerful faces... Grabbing the flowers, that girls held toward them, kissing the flowers, tossing them back to the girls...

The Marines. Marines, who had stood, jaunty, on street corners in Bordeaux... Tired, mud-spattered, unshaved... One fifth of them, marching between the empty ranks from which four fifths were gone now... Steel helmets, over eyes that looked straight forward. Eyes that could not be diverted, today, by women crying... The flowers, that women threw, bounced from their helmets, fell in the street, were tramped on...

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"Ah, Mademoiselle!" Madame Vidon threw her arms round Anne's neck, kissed her, her widow's veil askew. "In embracing you, I embrace the whole American nation!" The little woman, crying... Anne, too, was crying... Across the Avenue Président Wilson the Big Wigs were shaking hands with one another...

...

"Here we are." The girl from Iowa steered Anne into the low entry way of Number 12, rue d'Aguesseau. Odd-looking, middle-aged men stood in the hallway, in wrinkly uniforms, the red insignia of the Y.M.C.A. pinned on their caps. One of them dashed out and seized the girl from Iowa by the hand. 'Hell-lo, sister!' he shouted. 'Where did you blow in from? How's Billy and all the folks?' 'Hello, hello...' More men shaking hands with her, and talking. 'Say, where have I seen you before? Say, wasn't that the filthiest hole...' Two girls in Y.M.C.A. uniform pounced on the girl from Iowa from behind, clapping her shoulders, shaking her by the hand.

"We're fired, Emily," they shouted, laughing. "We got sent to a little dump up near Toul. There was an old Y. man up there. He had a rule nothing could be sold in the hut before eleven in the morning,—said the Colonel told him not to. Well, the Twenty-Sixth Division marched through on its way to the front about five A.M. one morning. Each outfit stopped to rest right outside our hut. They cursed the Y., of course, for not being open. We went and asked old Gottshalk for the key." "He told us," said the other girl, "that nothin' wasn't goin' ter be sold outa that there hut before eleven o'clock noon. Looking specially pretty, he was, too, beard growing, and a long white night-shirt,—" "Shut up," said the first girl, "you *will* be fired! So we climbed in the window. We'd given everything away before the old boy got up." "Mad, whew!" The other girl stood with her arm across her companion's shoulder, one foot twisted across the other ankle. "Bursting! Told us to take the next train!" "So here we are!" The three laughed, merrily...

The Y.M.C.A. man who had greeted the girl from Iowa, shook his head behind them. Queer type of girl the Y. sent over... They sent 'em to do cooking, yet clearly most of these young women had never seen a cook stove... Inconceivable how these girls could have been brought up, to know so little of ordinary work about the home... Yet he'd seen girls of this type chop wood, or ride a horse, or walk ten miles without a sigh... Husky young creatures... Took life as a joke, that was the trouble... Including the men secretaries... He cleared his throat, and spat, and walked off...

"Come on." The girl from Iowa pulled Anne's arm. Anne went, slowly. Like to just stand there, watch 'em... Like standing in the corner store of some small town in the U.S. You could almost smell coffee... "A FRIENDLY PLACE FOR FRIENDLY FOLKS." A huge sign blazoned on the wall of an enclosed courtyard. A balcony

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ran round it. Desks lined the side walls, under the balcony. "DON'T FORGET THE FOLKS AT HOME!" Placard, printed in red, on purple background. Two rows of large, stuffed armchairs, stood back to back down the center of the hall. In each chair a man secretary was sitting. There were a few plain, wooden chairs left empty. On one of these a Y.M.C.A. girl sat down, sighing. 'Been waiting one solid hour for my Worker's Permit...'

Anne and the girl from Iowa edged past lines of men and women secretaries in uniform, waiting before windows. "Orders of Transport," "Travel Orders," signs said... The talk was all of hardships... Of mud and rain, of nights spent travelling, or regiments that were moving... They laughed, and joked with one another... It was as though they'd just come back from camping... Before a window marked 'Post Office' the girl from Iowa lined up. After ten minutes she stopped at the window. "Morning, sister." A short, dark man inside, head cocked to one side... "Your mail? Sent it all up to Toul last week. By the way, where's Mr. Suydam now? Letters for him been piling up for two weeks." The man was holding Jerry's letters in his hand. Across the shoulder of the girl from Iowa, Anne saw her own handwriting. Once, long ago, Jerry had asked her to marry him... So Jerry didn't know yet that she wouldn't...

On the stairs people passed them. All cheerful, all in uniform. All wanting to get back 'out'... The work these people were doing was not here... Not in this crowded building... It was 'out' somewhere... War, to them, was still a Great Adventure... The Director of Women was a large, pleasant-faced, grey-haired woman. She held her hand out to Anne. "A friend of Evelyn Tollet's? Good! We want more people like her." Her keen eye watched Anne.

"I've had no experience," said Anne.

"Experience doesn't matter," said the woman. "Judgment and willingness to work are what count. Especially judgment. You've got to know how to handle situations. Got to be level-headed. This is a great experiment we're trying, Miss Wentworth. Never before have armies taken decent women with them. This is the first time. It's up to us to see it doesn't fail." This girl's eyes met you squarely... You could trust this girl... "You think you'll come with us?"

"If you'll send me toward the front," Anne said. "I've seen enough of the rear."

...

"There's a service or something she wants us to go to." The girl from Iowa was leading Anne toward a church across the street. Men and women in uniform sat with bowed heads. In the pulpit a stout, grey-haired man stood with his head back, eyes closed, talking. To God, you could tell by his voice... "You know our temptations, Lord! You know these towns of Europe, and their strange customs! O Lord, give our brothers strength to withstand the temptations that beset

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them. There are those among us, Father, who have sinned, who have been obliged to abandon the great pilgrimage before it had scarcely begun. Waiting is difficult, Lord. Waiting in Paris, especially difficult. We all know that. O Lord, give us strength to pass through this period of temptation. Our great opportunity for service shall come to us..." On and on. Ended, at last. So, God knew all about it... Voices trailing through a hymn:

'Come ye weary, heavy laden,
Bruised and mangled by the fall,
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all...'

A benediction... People getting up, shaking hands. 'Hello, how's the folks?' Anne fled through Gothic spaces, filled suddenly with the atmosphere of a small town in the U.S. The sunlight in the doorway... Out, through it... Thank God... The girl from Iowa caught up to Anne, running along the sidewalk.

"Gosh," said Anne. "I wonder what those old boobs have been doing?"

...

"Great Guns!" said the Major. Anne looked up. Rose and Rosalie came in, dressed alike, in costumes of fawn-colored whipcord, with flaring coats, great pockets, like the British. Neat, cloth hats, cream-colored spats over brown shoes, highly polished, gloves of chamois to match the gaiters, hand-sewn, the insignia of the Air Service pinned on their collars. Sam Browne belts, with brass hooks,– and in their hands, canes... "Wonderful! By Jove!" The Major stood up, saluted.

"We're going to the front today." They chattered... "Good-bye. Good-bye." Anne walked down the hall with them. "We must stop and get Fou-Fou." A large, white Pomeranian on a leather leash jumped at them from the guard-room. "Tiens! Mon petit toutou!" Fou-Fou jumping, jumping, licking, being patted...

"How lovely you girls look!" Miss Featherstone stood, bright eyes shining under the black hair. "And Fou-Fou, a perfect match for your spats! The Air Service will certainly be proud!" Rose and Rosalie shaking hands with everyone... Fou-Fou prancing at the leash... They stepped out, past the sentry, under the flag, hanging lazy, waving. Sergeant Smith, tall, immaculate, stepped from the shiny Cadillac at the curb, helped them to get in, stood by the door, talking, laughing with them, patting Fou-Fou... Came to attention, suddenly. Stood, stiff, unswerving, military, his blue eyes glazed. A short thick-set man scampered across the sidewalk, jumped into the car,– the General... His aide, tall and dapper, saluting, speaking to the Sergeant, taking his place on the small seat across from Fou-Fou... The Sergeant banged the door, ran round to the seat beside the driver. Gears crunched, the great car moved. A white star, on a red plate...

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Above it, through the plate-glass window, cream-colored gloves, that waved...

"Say, it's a great war!" said the sentry by the front door...

...

"What do you suppose the front is like, anyhow?" Anne turned from the open window. The front... Those two, in their pretty costumes,– going to it... The front... Place of mystery... Place where the world stopped... Place where everyone who was not, wanted to be... Place from which everyone who was there wanted to get back... As though the world were flat, and one looked toward an edge, a precipice,– nothing beyond it...

Anne turned to go. Miss Featherstone darted at her, took her arm, walked with her. The bird-like eyes gazed shining, into Anne's eyes. "Tell me," she said suddenly. "What do you hear about Lieutenant Monks? Does Joan hear from him often?"

"I,– I don't talk to her much about that. Why?"

"I was just wondering." For a moment the sharp eyes searched Anne's. Then, with a little jerk, Miss Featherstone dropped her arm, and turned back...

...

Anne got home late, tired. The General had arrived, from Tours, and work had deluged. Rosalind's door was open. Rosalind lay on the bed, the back of her clasped hands resting on her forehead. She raised them to look at Anne. Eyes, full of tears... Anne stood, gazing. Was Randolph,– Had she heard something? Had Amélie Delsart,– but no. Amélie Delsart was game,– she wouldn't,– "What's the matter?" Anne stood beside her, looking down. Rosalind tired, tired ... Like everyone...

"One of my Marines. He's dying. Anne, his whole stomach's gone. I don't see how he's lived so long as he has. He must die,– they all know that,– yet he can't seem to." She lay, quite still, her clasped hands above her eyes. "He suffers so..." Silence. Outside the birds were twittering in the courtyard... "They told me to put the screen around him yesterday afternoon." Rosalind sighed. "I couldn't bear to come away and leave him in there, alone. So I stayed,– for two hours after the night nurse came on. And still he was there when I left. He kept saying, 'Good-bye, Nurse!' And he was still there this morning when I got back. Today we did the same thing over. I still keep hearing him whisper, 'Good-bye, Nurse.'" Anne did not say anything. Just stood by the open window, looking out. There was not anything to say... Some things, in war,– At last she turned, slowly.

"Tomorrow I'm going to ask the Colonel if I can join the Y.M.C.A.," she said.

...

"I think perhaps you're right," the Colonel held his hand out, smil-

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ing. "You're strong enough to do it? It's going to be cold,– and dangerous,–" Anne laughed.

"In war," she said, "it doesn't matter if you get killed."

...

Homesick, now, for the office... Two weeks had passed. Two weeks of walking pavements, trying to get uniforms, equipment, passes. They'd lost her Worker's Permit for her. She needed a new passport. Her orders didn't come through. Anne threw herself on her bed. She wished she'd never joined the blooming Y.M.... "Cheer up," said Joan. "You've only been waiting two weeks. After all, almost everyone waits in Paris more than two weeks,–" "But damn it, I want to get there before the drive starts," Anne said...

...

Sunday. A day of blue sky, puffy white clouds. Anne and Rosalind rode out on a small tram to Malmaison and climbed a steep hill. On its top they lay down on their backs in the cool grass. Rosalind sighed. "I'm ashamed to feel so awfully tired so soon," she said. "Have you been feeling tired for a whole year, Anne?"

"You get it in spots, and you get over it," said Anne. "Like going without your dinner, once you get past your dinner time, you feel better. You think you can't bear War a minute longer, and then, somehow, you live through." Anne sat up, clasped her hands about her knees. Wind, blowing through her hair... Wind, smelling of new-mown grass, and flowers... A tugboat, below there on the shining river, sending up white smoke. Green fields, purple distance, the broad horizon... Gay, white clouds. Sun, warming your shoulder blades... Geoffrey would,– God... He couldn't feel the west wind... Would never feel,– Where was he? Geoffrey... Geoffrey...

Rosalind, looking up, saw tears trickling down Anne's cheek, dripping to her clean, white collar. She sat up, laid her hand on Anne's. "What is it?"

"It's too good a day to be dead," Anne said. They sat, looking into the blue-green valley of the Seine. Rosalind said nothing. Nothing you could say...

"Lend me your handkerchief," Anne said, at last...

...

They walked along the Quai d'Orsay on the way home. Late,– nearly midnight, the city dark and quiet. A stillness... Anne stopped, caught Rosalind's elbow. "Look at that!" A sudden light flared across the roofs of houses. Boom... Boom... Growing louder... Louder...

"What is it?" Rosalind lifted her white face toward the northwest.

"Something happening along the front again," said Anne. "Oh, dear. I did hope that I'd be there for this one!" Little boys, with streamers fluttering from paper caps, dodged past them, laughing. It was July fourteenth, 1918.

...

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"The General wants you to come back till you get your orders," said Joan next morning. "There's a drive on, you know, he's frightfully busy." Anne got up, dressed quickly. Easy to go back... The office, throbbing... Generals coming, going... Colonels in command of pursuit groups along the front strode in. There was a great map in the General's office. They stuck in little flags at places near Soissons, at places near Toul. "Put in a call for the Commander-in-Chief, please, Miss Wentworth..." Anne took up the mouthpiece of the field telephone, cleared her throat. Ready to say 'Allo, Mademoiselle,' fourteen times... 'Operator?' A nasal voice. An American voice,— Anne held the receiver away, looking at it. "What's happened?" she said. Was she at home again? "The C.-in-C. at Chaumont. Yes."

"American telephone girls." The Major laughed. "They get you your number like you were in the U.S. Had a look at those girls yet, Miss Wentworth? Snappiest outfit of girls that's come across yet."

"Good Heavens, here's G.H.Q. already!" Anne stepped to the General's door, stepped back again. "More girls in this building?" she said. A General's aide, who sat in an armchair in the corner, laughed. "Telephones will win the war!" he said.

...

"Sir!" The tall, good-looking sergeant who had escorted Rose and Rosalie and their General to the front stood at a stiff salute before the Major. "Sergeant?" "The General wants a pair of field glasses to take back up with him this afternoon, Sir."

"Thought you took a pair with you the last time, Sergeant. They're scarce, those,— hard to,—"

"You see, Sir," the Sergeant blushed a little. "The girls, they always ride out with the General. He wants one for them,—"

"Oh!" The Major coughed. "I see! I see! Miss Wentworth, get the supply depot on the wire! Ask for a Cadillac for me,—" The Sergeant saluted, whirled, walked out.

"It's a great war," said the Major, laughing...

...

Anne found her travel order with the mail at Madame de Mourgues' at lunch time. So, she was really going... Today she'd felt as though she were back at Aviation. Almost wished now that she wasn't going. Easy to stay where things were all familiar... "Gosh, I wish I was going with you," Joan said...

...

Anne went to say good-bye to the Colonel. Same broad room, light from the open window falling on a bowl of cactus dahlias. Lettice, at her little table, in the corner. The Colonel got up, strolled forward with his hand out. So he was really sorry... A pleasant handclasp, large, all-embracing. From behind him, Lettice, looking at you... Lettice's pale face was puffy now, her dimpled smile quite

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gone. A strange heaviness, an inactivity, about her body. Lettice, who used to float in and out like a grey feather, now sitting there, and pouting... What had happened to her... in these past months,– The Colonel, still shaking your hand, talking:

"You deserve a D.S.C. and a Gold Crown in Heaven, Miss Wentworth. Going to miss you,– yet I can't blame you one little bit for going. Wish I'd landed up there myself instead of,–" He stopped. "I shan't worry about you up there, either," he went on. "The American Army's going ahead now. Nothing's going to stop 'em!"

Anne turned to say good-bye to Lettice. Lettice, smiling faintly,– very faintly,– 'Sorry...' Lettice, sorry only for herself now... Lettice, with red eyelids, rising slowly, as though her limbs were heavy, coming to the doorway. Standing, a heavy, roundish figure, by the Colonel... Anne went down the hallway. She turned. The Colonel smiling, waving. 'Let us know where you go!' Lettice, there beside him, hardly smiling at all...

"Sure I will," Anne said...

...

"I'm just as glad to be getting out of that place." Anne and Joan walked across the bridge together. "Somehow I think that the morale has cracked a little. Why don't you get out, too, Joan?"

"There are days,–" Joan's face was troubled, "when I think the Colonel needs me. Lettice seems to be sick quite often these days. She stays at home a good deal. I know the work. Then, too, when Monkey comes down, I want to be here,–"

"One thing I didn't understand about War till I got here," Anne gazed at the sunset behind the Trocadéro.

"What?"

"That it's so mixed up with Love..."

...

"You really goin', Anne?" Randolph looked up at her from his bed. She sat down next him.

"You'll be able to dance when I get back," said Anne. Randolph tried to smile. But somehow the long scar on his left cheek stopped him... He shook his head.

"I doubt it. There's not much left to dance with." Silence. Outside the window, leaves moved, slowly... Randolph's eyes watched them, tired. Trying to get up energy to say something... "Anne, Ros told me about Geoff," he said slowly. "Him gone, and a bum like me, lyin''here." Silence again. Anne patted his arm, gently.

"You're glad Ros came?"

"Couldn't have got through without her. There were times, Anne, when I was swimmin', swimmin'... Ready to let go. Drift out of it, away from all the pain and racket. She pulled me out, Anne,– made me sit up and fight,– made me think there was somethin' left to fight for. I was so tired of fightin'. Tired of wonderin' whether

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I was goin' to burn. I didn't burn, in the end, Anne. I just naturally fell."

"Did you?" Anne watched him. So he could remember that now... How far back of that could he remember? His face, under the broad bandage, so tired, haggard.

"Mother feels badly about Ros bein' here," he said. "Her letters are unhappy. 'Tis tough on her, to stay off there,– have someone else in her place. But I've just naturally got to have someone to care about, Anne, you know that!" Anne, standing by the bed, took his hand. 'In France the men bow first...' Should she tell him? Should she? He watched her, his eyes hollow, weary...

"Yes, I know," she said. "Good-bye."

...

"You will come back, Anne?" Marie de Mourgues patted Anne's shoulders with her thin hands that evening. "You will not fail to return here always? You will consider my house as yours in Paris, n'est-ce pas? My sister and I should never pardon you if you went elsewhere!" Tears in Anne's eyes. Somehow, she couldn't answer. This was home... Home...

...

Night. Anne tossed. Last night of comfort... Why couldn't she sleep? No air raid,– She had sat up late, packing, giving away the things that were left. Scrap baskets, candlesticks, shoe trees,– 'Perhaps you'd like these,–' Poor Joan... 'No, I don't want 'em,' she'd said. You had to leave them,– no other way. That was War,– leaving things behind you. Things were of no importance... Life was what mattered... To live each minute,– while the minutes lasted... To the War Gods, lives were of no importance... Lives were scrap baskets, shoe trees, to be thrown out when the Gods moved on... But to you, who were young, whose lives were being kicked about, they mattered... Nobody ever gladly threw his life down,– that was rot, that. One of those notions people had about War... You pitched your blooming body into the maelstrom, and it stayed with you, hurting, till it was finished... And what's more, you complained while it was hurting... You cursed War... Not the enemy,– you and he were in the same box,– you cursed the whole damn system...

One o'clock striking. Must wake up at four,– Anne tossed to the other side of the bed. A year ago, tonight, by the old ways of reckoning, she had landed at Hâvre. Two lifetimes, really... One lifetime in Bordeaux... That old, civilian Major trying to be hard-boiled. An upright man,– a man who made everybody hate him... Nurses,– their talk,– But their efficiency. Must try always to think of nurses working... To see them marching into horror, smiling, helping... Not to listen to the things they said in their beds,– You had been young then. Had danced with Marines, with lovely uniforms, long, slim legs...

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Another lifetime in the Air Service. The Colonel,– whose good nature pervaded the whole building... Brock, at his desk, sardonic, doing everyone's work... Everyone laughing... Girls... The French people,– a strange, subtle riddle lurking behind all this... The girls at the office, showing pindling legs, half hiding painted faces... Clémentine,– the hardest worker Anne had ever seen,– happy again, now, with her new man... Amélie... The old Générale... Madame de Mourgues,– 'nous autres...' Why was it that when one thought of France one thought of women? Their courage, their suffering, giving up everything they loved that France might live. Suffering... It made you older. Marines, tossing on hospital beds. Sick, suffering men, dark hollows growing under their eyes. Geoffrey... America, too, giving up... Lives... Not just for France...

Two o'clock striking. The sharp z-z-z-t, z-z-z-t of wireless from the Eiffel Tower. Not just for France. 'America has no reason for being unless her destiny and duty be ideal. It is her incumbent privilege to declare and stand for the rights of men. Nothing else is worth fighting for...' That was it... These young men throwing their lives on the Great Scrap Heap so that France would never, never need this kind of help in future. Not so that France might live, and go on fighting, as she had been fighting for a thousand years now. Internationalism that America was fighting for, not nationalism... Not for France... 'We're fighting to lick the Germans,' Brock had said one day at the office. The soldier in the corner had said, 'Sure.' The Adjutant had said, 'Sure.' They had believed that. 'The rest of it is bunk,' they had kept saying...

Tomorrow,– today it was now,– a new life. Where? How? She didn't know. Tomorrow she'd be somewhere... Ah, that was thrilling! That was what made War,– You oughtn't to feel that, but,– Tomorrow you were going out with the crusaders... Out to help substantiate the vision... Only that was worth fighting for. But could you? Could you make a world, after all, better than its men were? A handful who saw a vision, lived for an ideal... Hundreds of others who could not, did not want to see it... Men, so primitive, so brave, so childlike before the lusts of war-time. Could nations rise above what men themselves were?

"Le chocolat, Mademoiselle!" Clémentine, standing in the doorway... Morning...

...

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BOOK IV

(Boots– boots– boots– boots, movin' up an'
down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Don't– don't– don't– don't look at what's in
front of you
(Boots– boots– boots– boots, movin' up an'
down again;)
Men– men– men– men– men go mad with
watchin' 'em,
An' there's no discharge in the war.

Try– try– try– try– to think o' something
different–
Oh– my– God–keep– me from goin' lunatic!
(Boots– boots– boots– boots, movin' up an'
down again!)
There's no discharge in the war.

KIPLING

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BOOK IV

A NEW person. Anne could see her in the narrow mirror of the jolting taxi. Her neat, white collar, her blue tie, her grey-green suit. The hat, with its down-curved brim, the blatant crimson triangle balanced on its point above the tailored bow. One lost one's identity in a uniform... Became a symbol, a living part of something... A part of what? 'We feed the soldiers,' the girl from Iowa had told her. 'The rest of it is bunk...'

The taxi, already stopping at the station. Officers and men were showing papers, passing through the gateway toward a train that waited. There were no women going,– only soldiers. The portress, in her black apron, stopped her little truck on which Anne's bags were loaded. "Mais c'est le train du front, Madame," she protested. These Americans were ignorant of all things, they were stupid... Yet, that was an Ordre de Transport that this girl was pulling,– "Goin' up to join the army?" said the M.P. at the gateway. "Soldat, elle!" shouted the portress at the French guard. "Oui, oui, oui," he grunted, "il y en a beaucoup chez les Américains."

Anne found a seat next the window of a first-class carriage. French officers were sitting in the other corners, reading newspapers, yawning. Might have been commuters, starting for the office. One of them got up and helped Anne with her bags... An Italian captain paused in the railroad carriage door, saluting. He came and installed himself in the middle seat. Great, bulging hat, shining black boots, slippery face...Large, dark eyes that stared, insolent, that tried to meet Anne's. She looked out the window. Would be all right with these respectable French captains... They'd protect you... American lieutenant, bouncing in, breathless, chucking his bags up, sitting down next her. "The game is to pluck a little paper ticket and get in to breakfast when it first opens," he said. "Want me to get one for you?" He dodged off, onto the platform. "Thanks," Anne called.

The French officer in the corner lowered his newspaper, gazed solemnly over his spectacles at Anne. The Italian smiled. He would have been quicker if he'd known the bella signorina was so easy... 'Taisez-vous, méfiez-vous,' said the sign over his head, 'les oreilles ennemies vous écoutent.' [1] The Frenchman raised his paper. No explaining these Americans... The young lieutenant came back, carrying two bits of bright green paper.

"Thank you," Anne said...

...

In the dining car was another Y.M.C.A. girl. She sat with two

[1] 'Do not talk. Be on your guard. Enemy ears are listening to you.'

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American officers and a French Captain. "Where you bound?" the girl asked as Anne edged past. "Neufchâteau. I believe I change at Chaumont." "Everybody changes at Chaumont," said the other girl. "I'm bound for the Vosges myself. Rotten Division to be in, Neufchâteau. They never pay any attention to anyone up there..." Without bread tickets, the waitress was explaining to Anne's Lieutenant it was 'défendu' to sell them bread.

"Ah, Mademoiselle, permit me!" The French Captain tore out three tickets from his bread book, handed them across the passage. "Regard, I have plenty. Ah, no, it is a pleasure!"

"Breakfast on this train is one of the best things in the whole war!" said the Lieutenant. He sniffed the pungent smell of strong, fresh coffee... The train jiggled, slowly, through the suburbs. The French Captain was talking of the great deeds of the Americans near Soissons...

"Why, I'd no idea going to the front would be fun," said Anne.

...

A station. Train slowing, rattling. "You get off, and you run like Hell," said the Lieutenant. They got off onto the platform, and ran forward. "Last time I ate in a diner, they cut the car off that had my duffle bag in it," panted the Lieutenant over his shoulder. "I've never seen the blooming thing since. Where the deuce were we anyway?"

"There was an Italian," Anne gasped.

"Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle! La voilà. La voilà, votre place. Montez! Montez!" It was the French Captain of the newspaper and the spectacles. He was leaning out, waving, holding his hand out,— The train began rolling from the station. Anne grasped the hand of the French Captain, pulled herself up.

"Merci, Monsieur," she panted.

"By Gosh! We darn near lost our bags!" said the Lieutenant...

...

Woods, and little hills, all clothed in greenness... Green pastures, edged with straggling, tall trees. A little river, that wound its way among them, molten silver. Deep fields of grain and scarlet poppies, flashing blue cornflowers. All dashing past you... Soft cushion, just where you laid your head back... Hot... Summer... A flat wheel, jolting the miles off. Ker, bump... Ker, bump... 'Toward the front,' it sa d, 'toward the front, toward the front, toward the,—' Drowsy... The American Lieutenant had found someone he knew, and they were standing, talking in the corridor outside. The Italian opposite stared at the red triangle on Anne's hat, the red triangle on her arm, the U.S. embroidered on her coat collar, at her stockings, at her American shoes. His eyes met hers. Seemed, in some oily way, to ask a question ... Anne opened her mouth very wide, yawned at him, slowly. That worked, often... The Italian uncrossed his thin legs, climbed out into the corridor. The signorina's tonsils were not pretty.

'Toward the front, toward the front...' Flat cars, winking past

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the window, covered with guns... French soldiers... sitting, patient on them... Tiny freight cars,– 'Hommes 18,' painted on them, and 'Chevaux 8.' In the open doorways of the cars red, weather-beaten faces, American faces, grinning, waving at Anne, yelling, 'Hello!' She jumped up, leaned out the window, waved, waved. Hundreds of brown arms, waving, growing smaller... "De galants soldats!" said the French officer, opposite. Anne leaned back again. Hot... Outside, scarlet poppies, blue-grey oats, cornflowers... Tiny, red-roofed houses. The carriage, getting hotter every minute. 'Il est dangereux de se pencher en dehors.'[1] The Zone of Advance... At last... Ker bump, ker bump... War, not the way you thought it would be... Nothing, ever, the way you thought it would be...

...

'Toward the front,' slower... 'To...ward,' slower still... 'The'... Stopped... The train had stopped. A woman, in a black apron was digging out there in a field of cabbage. She looked up at the train, holding her hand across her brow to shade her from the baking, summer sunshine. Then she turned and bent her broad back. The compartment grew stifling. The occupants woke up, with little snorts. The French Captain pushed open the door, descended, looked down the track. "Ce sont les troupes qui passent," he remarked. Anne leaned out the open doorway. Off, through the pretty fields, another little railway crossed theirs. Along it another little train puffed slowly. American soldiers, leaning out of box-cars, shouting, waving... Trains of flat-cars, covered with artillery, queerly painted... More box-cars... More soldiers... The French Captain walking up and down now, smoking. For three hours they stood there, broiling, waiting. Hunger, gnawing at your insides... The old cabbage woman filled a sack and, hoisting it to her broad back, trudged off, to dinner.

...

Train, rolling into Troyes. A big town,– place where they made a treaty or something one time... Important now only if one could eat there... There would be déjeuner served on the train, if one could get a place there, said one of the French officers. One would have luck to get a place, though... "Not going to risk it," said the American Lieutenant. "A bird down the track there said they might cut the train in two." Anne jumped down onto the crowded platform. Anything to get out of that hot place...

"There is no place, Madame, I assure you." The Dining Car Chef stood, defiant. French officers, arguing, surged all about him.

"Du courage, Madame! Du courage!" The little French Captain who had given her his bread card tapped Anne's elbow. "C'est pour une Américaine," he turned to the Chef, shouting. "Mais oui, c'est vrai!" stormed another officer. "You ought to give a place to an American!" Anne said nothing. Better to be helpless... A squeaking

[1] 'It is dangerous to lean out.'

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of tin horns, blowing of whistles... The long train jolted forward. The little Captain pushed Anne to the platform of the Wagon-Restaurant. He stood there, gallant, waving: "Soissons est prise!" he was saying. "It is the Americans who have taken Soissons. This lady is American!"

A French corporal, eating at a table, rose and made a low bow. 'If Madame would honor him by taking his place,–' Anne flushed, protesting. A captain, in the next seat, telling the Corporal in French that he was foolish... 'But thou wilt get nothing more to eat.' The Corporal waved his napkin, eh bien, would prefer to give up his last dinner on earth than to see une Américaine go hungry. The Chef bounced in, waving a pink paper. He had one, he had found a place. Everyone sat down. Everyone was happy, smiling. The waitress was pouring wine out. The waitress could not understand the word for water. Anne raised her glass toward the fine, tired-looking Captain, the ugly little Corporal. They were considering what pretty color had these American ladies... They held their glasses toward hers.

"Vive la France!" she said.

...

The bag was still there, and the American Lieutenant, very morose, very hungry. He had not been able to buy bread in Troyes, he said, not having a bread card, and the chocolate he had bought was made of sand. "What a shame," Anne said. "The lunch was like the best French restaurant at home,–" Heavens, making him worse... They sat, in gloomy silence. The French officers glanced at them through cigarette smoke. Tiens, these young people must have had a quarrel... The Italian took his cap off, smoothed his oily hair back. What use, getting started with a woman so quickly, if she so quickly threw one over?

...

Afternoon. Heat, worse than the morning... The train seemed going slower. Ker... Bump... Ker... Bump. Very slow indeed. The Italian officer was snoring, his mouth wide open, oily hair back against the grey seat. Anne would never put her head back again... Always pin a paper,– There was something, Anne gathered from swift sentences in French, the matter with the engine. There had been something the matter with it at Troyes, but, because of the movement of troops there had been no other. For an hour they waited. Outside a dusty road gleamed in the white heat...

"Listen!" The other Y.M.C.A. girl leaned through the carriage door. Nice to see another girl... One did get tired of being alone with just men... The Italian officer woke up, snorting. Mother of Christ, another bella signorina... "They say this train's broken down," said the other girl. She was a short, snub-nosed person. "They say they're going to send an engine out and tow it back to Troyes. Now I say,–" The American Lieutenant rose. The girl sank into his seat. "Thanks. I say we get off here. We're near a filthy little dump called Bar-sur-

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Aube. I've been there before,– There's a remount station or something. We might get a ride up on a truck, you know from here."

"Mesdemoiselles!" The French officers saluted as they got out...

...

They were in the white, dusty road, carrying their bags. The sun baked on their cloth hats. The other girl was cheerful. "I believe in always going ahead," she said, "never let 'em tow you back if you can help it." She had been in the Vosges,– she called it Vos Gees,– two months, and she wanted to get back... A small boy trudged along the road toward them in a black smock. He pushed a wheelbarrow. The boy's black apron was covered with white dust, turning it grey. Only his cheeks shone pink. Could he take their bags? They set them down, desperate, in the white road, mopping their faces. Damn these thick uniforms... "Ne peux pas." The stalwart figure marched on, stamping heavy boots in powdery dust. A little cloud came up behind him.

"Just you look here," the Y.M.C.A. girl seized the boy by the shoulder, turned him round. "Wait a minute." She was piling the bags on the wheelbarrow. Anne was piling hers. The little boy would not push, but he would follow. The two American girls wheeled their bags into the tiny, mediæval town before them.

...

A narrow, white-walled street... A clattering of hoofs, somewhere, growing louder... Round a corner, suddenly, a chestnut horse came, huge, proud, taking up the whole street reaching the roofs of the white houses. On his back, way up there, sat a young man. He should have been in armor... But he was in the uniform of the United States, a red band round his sleeve, with black letters, A.P.M. Anne set down the wheelbarrow. Hoped the great horse would not step on it... The officer leaned down, taking his cap off. "How do you do, Miss Silsby?" he was saying. He and the Y.M.C.A. girl shook hands. In the narrow street, their laughter echoed. "We were just going to report to the Provost Marshal," said Miss Silsby.

"That's me," the Lieutenant got down. "I'll take you to the hotel..." He smiled, delighted, leading the great horse. "Gee," he said, "it certainly is good to see a woman..."

...

"Let's go swimming," said the Assistant Provost Marshal. They were sitting in the narrow, stone-paved entrance hall of the hotel. The girls had changed into dry underclothes, thin dresses. The hotel was kept by a stout old Monsieur, and a still stouter Madame. They had given the girls two small, adjoining rooms, on the first floor. Ah, ha! they were friends of M. le Lieutenant...

"Swimming?" said Anne. It was in the old life that one went swimming... That was all past. One had forgotten such things.

"Sure," said the Lieutenant, "there's a fine swimming hole down the

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Aube about two miles. You wait, and I'll go fetch the C.O. of the town. He'd like to come, too."

Miss Silsby had a bathing suit in her bag,– one got a chance to swim fairly often up in the Vos Gees, she said. Anne tried to buy one in the store across the street. A robe to swim? The woman behind the counter had never heard of one! What did Mademoiselle want such a thing for? "Nager," said Anne. 'Costume de bain,– Oh, la, la!' As Anne left the store, Madame conversed rapidly with her daughter in French...

Anne stopped before an ancient well in the town square. The bucket ropes had worn deep, shiny grooves in the grey stone. Ropes, that must have been sliding up and down through ten or twelve wars.

An old woman stopped, and set her pail down. "Américaine!" she stated.

"Oui," said Anne.

"Avec l'armée?" asked the old woman. A kind face, full of wrinkles...

"Oui."

"Pas bon?" the old woman inquired, a friendly interest deepening the wrinkles.

"Oh, no. Bon! Bon!" said Anne. She walked toward the hotel.

"Never mind the bathing suit," called Miss Silsby from the window, "we'll take turns in mine..."

...

Under a tall, steep bank the river eddied in a green pool. Anne climbed onto a log, fallen across it. She stood a minute, poised, balancing, looking down. Bare feet, clinging to the damp log. Air, blowing, cool, across bare arms, bare legs... Below, against the deep brown of the bottom, green weeds, waving... From the edge of the little field opposite the steep bank, the voices of two young men and Miss Silsby, laughing. 'Go on!' they shouted, 'go on!' She saw her image dart across the sky that shimmered in the water. Cool, deep water, gliding along your sides, bubbling into ears and eyes, wetting the edges of your hair under the cap... Your body, long and curving, toes stretched, hands pointed upward, motionless... The current took you. You came up, under the willows on the far bank.

"Whew!" Anne took two or three strokes, slowly. One's arm came back gladly to the old motion, up, over one's head, down, pushing. To feel cool water, slipping past you... To feel your muscles stretch themselves and pull, and send you, gliding... To turn onto your back and lie there, looking upward... The blue sky above, water below, a cradle ... To double up your back and sink again under gurgling water, and to open your eyes, and push your face along, watching arms and legs, pale green where sunlight reached them... This was to live again. Summer... Water... Sky... The old life... If only Geoffrey,– Anne turned, and swam toward the shore. She climbed out to where

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Miss Silsby and the two young men were sitting at the field's edge.

"I forgot," she said. "I'll go in the bushes and change quickly." The young men dove into the pool. Came up, blowing like seals.

"If anyone comes along," they called, "scream and we'll charge out at them!"

...

The four walked back across the fields, wind blowing against them. The day growing cooler. This was vacation... Summer... Two soldiers came straggling across the field toward them. "Hell! I suppose I've got to stop and bawl these fellers out now," said the Captain. In his voice infinite boredom... He too, for a moment had forgotten... "What the Hell are you men,–" They heard his voice behind them... The two girls and the A.P.M. walked on. Across the green field the Captain's stern voice followed. Oaths... Proper curses... War...

...

The Captain and the A.P.M. went off to an inspection. 'We're coming back,' they said, 'to take you out to supper...' The two girls lay on their beds, resting, and smoking. "I thought I was coming to the front," said Anne, "and here I am, out on a nice vacation."

"That's the beauty of going to the front," said Miss Silsby. "You never can be quite sure what's going to happen..."

...

They sat about a table on the edge of a great cliff. The fan-shaped valley of the Aube was spread below them. Summer sun, slanting across a checkerboard of fields, green, buff and yellow. Among them, the white ribbon of the road, winding northward. From out the ancient inn, a stout Madame brought an omelette, brought sausages, brought salad. A bottle of champagne of the countryside,– the water in that country was 'pas bon,' she assured them. They tipped their chairs back, looked down across the valley. A train, like a slow black worm, crawled past. 'More artillery,' the men said...

Long, long ago, in the olden time, Madame told them, as they ate, there had been a conqueror called Attila, one said, who made his camp right here, where they were sitting. This Attila sent word down to the town of Bar that the prettiest girl of the village should be sent up to him. A girl, called Germaine, très jolie, came up the steep path. When she arrived here, she ran and hurled herself over this cliff, at their feet. 'The cliff of Sainte-Germaine' they called it to this day... "What's it all about?" said the Captain. Anne told the story. The other three ate their confiture and cream, and did not listen. The pink rays of the sunset touched their faces.

"And who the Hell was Attila?" said the Captain...

...

They walked through the woods, under a summer moon. A world of sweet smells, of rustling branches, of tiny animals, that scuttled... The Zone of Advance, Anne kept telling herself. Ferns that smelled

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sweet as your feet crushed them... Ferns, that had smelt the same way under the hoofs of Attila's horses... By her side the Lieutenant, talking to her. Behind her the Captain, telling Miss Silsby that she reminded him of his wife... At the edge of the woods they stopped, looked out across a valley pale in moonlight. A red glare lit the sky near the horizon. Through the red glare a light darted, burst, scattering soft stars downward...

"Star shells," said the Captain, "over Château-Thierry..."

...

Their hotel in the town slept in the moonlight, every shutter closed, its door locked. They pounded at the stalwart oak. Anne was tired, tired... The walk up the hill of Sainte-Germaine had been a long one. Was it a week ago that she had had two hours of sleep in Paris?

"Suppose you go away," said Miss Silsby, to the young men. "They're more apt to open it if you're not here." The officers' boots clattered round the corner and grew silent. The femme de chambre came and opened the oak door...

...

Night. A strange room. A noise, pulling you back from sleep... Anne raised her head up. A motor-cycle snorting, sputtering in the street below the window. A street so small that it was as if the motor-cycle were in the same room... Poundings on the door of the hotel... 'God damn these Frogs!' An American man's voice. 'Going to fire my gun a couple of times. See if that'll get 'em. Hell of a patriotic country this is! Ride on a truck for seventy-two hours, and then get to one of these God damned towns and they won't let you sleep.' Bang, bang, bang... 'Qui est là?' Feebly, the voice of the femme de chambre, from a window somewhere. 'Open the door and let me in,' bawled the American. 'Il n'y a pas de chambre!' came the voice. 'Open the door and let me in, you...' Miss Silsby, in her trench coat, tiptoed into Anne's room.

"We can't sleep till we stop this noise," she whispered. She stood in the window, looking out, down. "Listen," she called to the American, "she says there are no more rooms." Rays from a flashlight shot up toward the window, lighting Miss Silsby, standing in her trench coat. The American voice below grew softer, grew respectful.

"Tell her I haven't had any sleep for three days. Tell her vive la France and all that." Miss Silsby called the message to the femme de chambre. Ça ne fait rien, there *were* no rooms, the voice said.

"We could sleep together and give him one of ours," Anne whispered.

"Hush," said Miss Silsby. "Got to look out for the reputation of the U.S. Army."

"Oh, yes." Anne had forgotten.

"I say." A third voice, from above,– very English. "*Is* that an American lady down there?"

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"Yes," called Miss Silsby.

"Well, I say,"– sleepy,– the woman, too, was terribly sleepy, "I could come down with you, you know, and that officer could have my room."

"Fine!" shouted Miss Silsby. "Number five on the first floor. If you'll wait a minute," she called down to the officer, "I'll be down and let you in." She was putting on her shoes and stockings, twisting her hair up, jamming her hat on. She buttoned her trench coat, fumbled for the candle, lit it, started. Anne got up, lit a candle, began moving her possessions. War,– a conspiracy against sleep, that's all... The door opened. A tall girl with tousled, short, hair, and pink pajamas walked in. She dragged a trench coat by its corner, piled full of clothes. Her eyes opened, startled. She dropped the corners of the trench coat. A toothbrush fell out. The girl stood there, gazing:

"So there are two of you?" she said. "I say, then why didn't you give the man one of your own rooms?" The girl's pale face was tired...

"Because," Miss Silsby came in, business-like, and shut the door behind her. "Because of what these dirty-minded French would think if they should find this man in our room in the morning." The tall, pink figure crumpled by the bedside. She put her face down on her arm.

"Good Heavens," she said, "my reputation's ruined..."

"Gosh," said Anne, "so it is."

...

"Come on, we'll fix it up," said Miss Silsby. It had only been a minute, but it seemed an hour that they sat there, about the flickering candle... "Get on your coats," Miss Silsby, commanding, full of good sense, "we'll wake up Monsieur and Madame and explain."

Madame, very sleepy, bowing, blinking through a narrow crack of doorway. Monsieur snorting, grunting somewhere in the darkness. The girls stood in their trench coats, holding a candle. Madame Anglaise, of the number sixteen, Anne explained, had descended and was now couchée,– should you use couchée in such a case,– it didn't sound decent,– was now couchée with the two Américaines in the number five and the number six. An American officer was now in the number sixteen, but Mademoiselle Anglaise had descended... Over again... Clearly... Madame stood blinking at these strange young creatures. They might, it seemed, be amusing themselves more in France than they did... Why, after all, did one send women with the armies? These women were 'jeunes filles,' then? Madame understood. She bowed, she nodded.

"C'est tout-à-fait comme il faut, Mesdemoiselles. C'est la guerre!" she said.

...

Sliding down, bumping into Miss Silsby. Trying not to wiggle. Trying not to bump her, wake her. Staying there till your back ached, till your legs twitched. Vile sensation, feeling other people's bodies...

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Whoever invented double beds had been a moron... Thrashing, scrabbling, moving up one side, clinging to the edge. Sliding. Damn it, this wasn't sleeping... The window light again... Why, it was morning...

...

The smell of bacon coming from the kitchen. How long was it since you had smelled bacon? Young officers, rising from their chairs, embarrassed as the A.P.M. introduced Anne and Miss Silsby. The soldiers who waited on the mess had put flowers on the table in honor of the two girls. They brought in corn meal mush with sugar.

"How wonderful!" Anne sat down. Could hardly wait to get that first spoonful into your mouth... Milk, out of a tin, but nevertheless milk... Eggs, dropped on pieces of square, white toast... "Real bread? Whew!" She smiled up at the orderly. The orderly flushed. Say, it would be good to set right down and talk to them girls... *He* wouldn't set round like these here God damned lewies, sayin' nothin'... Christ how it made you feel to hear a woman talkin' English.

The girls walked out with the officers to see the horses at the remount depot. Why wouldn't they stay here? They could ride all they liked... Anne laughed. She had forgotten...

"Why I'm supposed to be 'reporting to a station'!" she said.

...

Chaumont. G.H.Q. Mysterious hiding place of G 1, G 2, G 3... Place she'd sent so many official letters... Place where the working of the whole A.E.F. was centered. Rain, spattering into a small street, its walls mud color... Miss Silsby had left. At the station she had hailed a passing soldier, flung him her bags, shouted to him to run. Anne had watched her leap on a train as it moved out, catch her bags one by one, as the soldier tossed them... Three hours to wait. Anne turned up her coat collar, pulled down her hat brim, walked out in the drizzling, French rain. There might be some place where one could get American food in this town... Food that filled you... Left you without that craving for chocolate that you had after French food... Men... Nobody but men... American soldiers who said 'Hello,' grinned at you, as if they'd always known you.

A big red triangle hung over the door of a low barrack. Officers, going in and out. Anne walked in, timid. Women, perhaps, were not supposed to,— Oh, it was all right! There was a pleasant, grey-haired lady, in a blue apron, with neat white cuffs and collar. How nice to be white-haired... To look so pleasant, so at home, so eminently respectable... A little bunch of poppies stood on each table. An open fire blazed in the fireplace beyond them. One would have known that there must be a woman... The grey-haired lady was coming toward Anne, with her hand out. "How do you do? Won't you come in and have lunch? I'm Mrs. Fisher..." Motherly person... How long it had been since one had lived in a world where there were mothers!

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"Thank you," said Anne. "I'd like to..."

...

An older man sat at the table, dressed as a major. Anne thought of elm trees, dangling green branches across windows. A lecture room at college... Government Sixteen... Why, this was the professor! He recognized her, shook hands. The old life,– a dream... Nothing real about it... Mr. Bird of Madame de Mourgues' came and sat next her. 'And Christiane?' he said... 'And Germaine?' 'And Clémentine?' They reminisced about the people of the pension. That was real... That was a life that still lived... The aviator, who had used to carry the dispatches to England, strolled up. The Avenue Montaigne,– Whipcords... Spurs... That vivid memory made her feel at home in this strange place.

"How are the pink plush armchairs là-bas?" The aviator looked down at Anne, a cigarette drooped from his mouth, eyes half closed from its smoke. The armchairs were doing pretty well, she told him. "Colonel's stenog. still there?"

"Still there!" Why should he ask her,–

"Remember old Monks?"

"Sure." Remember him! One of her chief worries... She had decided not to look him up in Chaumont. Didn't like him. Hoped Joan hadn't written,–

"He's come a cropper," the aviator, saying. Mrs. Fisher came and sat down across the fireplace, with her knitting. Her face looked pained. "Life got a little bit too complicated for old Monks," the aviator, talking. "Too bad. They say he had a girl back somewhere in the U.S., too. Well, boys, didn't we tell Anderson we'd play bridge at two?" The aviators strolled off.

"What happened to Monks?" Anne looked at Mrs. Fisher.

"He shot himself," the older woman shook her head, laid down her knitting. "Very sad. I think he really was an able person. He would have been all right if he could have got out, flying. There really wasn't anything for him to do here. He got to living with a French girl. Whether somebody warned him that he'd be court-martialled, or whether he got disease, or what, I don't know. Anyway, they found him with a bullet through his forehead. People are living under a great strain over here, aren't they?" She drew her hands up from her lap, and went on knitting.

Anne sat, quiet, staring at the fire. Joan... Poor old Joan... What would Joan do now? Always knew somehow, that Monks was a rotter... Not any worse than plenty of others... Ashamed, that was all ... Ashamed to face the music... Your eyes were looking at a fire, its flames sputtering... Over your head rain, pattering on a tin roof... Across the fireplace a white-haired woman, knitting... Pulling her spectacles down on her nose, and looking at you. "Gosh," Anne said.

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She walked up the hill. Kind Mrs. Fisher was standing in the doorway, calling directions, pointing toward Headquarters. Damn Headquarters... Damn the whole, blooming war, that took people, and shuffled them together, and made them fall in love with one another, that broke them, and twisted them, and left them lying, like old papers... Poor old Joan... Anne must go back, be with her,— She stopped, in the road. Couldn't go back... Couldn't move anywhere, except where the order of transport said she must move... She walked on. You were a chess man that had to jump according to the rules, now... Even if you were taken...

A great building about an open square. So that was Headquarters ... Wonder if they work in there, or if they sit in armchairs? Beyond Headquarters a path that wound down a hill, into a broad valley. Broad valley with hundreds of little cultivated fields, French peasants, tiny, bending figures in the distance, digging. Fields where peasants had been digging before the Romans came to fight here, before the Franks came, before the English and the Burgundians and the Germans... Before the Americans came... Fields that peasants would go on tilling, in their quaint, antiquated methods, long after the last American had gone home... Wars that came, with hordes of strange, young people, and somehow ended, and sent them home again, leaving the peasants, digging... Leaving strange children,— No matter what people did, Nature managed,— People went on eating, went on falling in love and having children, even in war. War and peace scudded over Human Life like shadows of clouds on the fields there... One generation lived in shadow... The next in sunlight...

"Say, sweetheart, waida minute..." Anne jumped. Heart knocking against her ribs... Breath coming quickly... A soldier lurched down the narrow path behind her, breathing heavily. Drunk... Anne looked back across her shoulder. His overseas cap, well over one eye, face leery... Anne walked faster. Behind her, he walked faster.

"Say, won' yer stop an' talk t'an American soldier?" She walked on. She could see nobody, except the distant peasants. To go back past Headquarters, she must turn and walk past him, up the hill. Frightened... First time in the whole war she'd been frightened... Submarines, bombs,— they might kill you,— they made Life more thrilling... This was different. She must walk faster, but she must not run. This path ought to hit a road down in the valley... She wished to God she knew...

"Say, you ...." That was a word that Anne had never heard before. A new one. Old as the hills, probably... Like this Great Slimy Monster, coming behind her. Only a man... Only a drunken soldier... Fool ... Idiot, to be so frightened... That was her mind talking... Mind, that never got quite to the bottom of things... This Thing behind was real, was terrible. Her knees were shaking. Life would go on... This was one of the ways that Nature took in war to make it go on... This

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Terror was Life, was Reality. You felt it. Didn't have to think about it. Mustn't run... Mustn't let the Beast feel your terror... Cling to the poor cobweb that civilization had flung around It... A road, at last. But there was no one on it. Must do something... Anything would be better than walking on with the Slimy Terror coming...

Anne turned round, facing the lurching soldier. Your muscles were strong,– you could scratch, bite... She held her hand out, primly. Only a poor, childish man, after all, this... Yet, Something, working through him... Something that leered out of his bleary, wet eyes... Beast... The Beast, retreating now, behind the Man there... The man, childish, foolish, pushing his cap across the other eye with his left hand. With his right, shaking Anne's hand, sheepish... 'Here we are at the road,' Anne heard her voice say. So one talks, sometimes to little children... 'Now,– You're going that way. And I'm going this way. Good-bye! Good luck to you! Good-bye!'

She turned, and walked away toward the town. Quivering, listening, with every nerve, for footsteps. Could hear only her own shoes on the damp road... She looked back, gingerly, across her shoulder. Down the road, in the other direction, the khaki-colored figure wobbled...

...

A French train, with no corridor, stood puffing at the station. A French official was showing Anne on board... There was a place left in the First Class, no one except American officers,– she would like it... The American officers were negroes. They were polite, and quiet. They helped Anne with her bags. One of them moved, gave her his seat by the window. The officers sat, quiet. They had got into the train early, on purpose to get a compartment by themselves, careful not to offend. But if this lady wanted to sit with them... The lady, it seemed, was anxious about a friend. She got out, stood on the platform, looking...

Anne stood there, looking at her watch. Three minutes to decide whether her principles were any good or not... Anne believed in Justice for the Negro. Her grandfathers had fought for the north in the Civil War. At college she had always championed the negroes. Used to ask them to sit with her at lunch, just to show Adelaide de Lancey and the rest that, if the President of the Class could do it,– This car had no corridor... The train might stop and stand on the track for hours. Might spend the night there... So, she was a coward. So ideals weren't, after all, worth anything. Could Human Nature ever live up to an Ideal? She wondered. She hated cowards...

"I see my friend now," she said, climbing to the carriage. "I believe I better go and sit with her." The negro officers helped to take her bags down. They smiled. 'Glad she'd found her friend. Lonely, for ladies, coming out here.' One of them wanted to carry her bag to where her friend was. Thank God, here was a French porter coming... They

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wouldn't have to know that she was a coward... "Thank you so much. You're awfully good," she said. 'Not at all. It's a pleasure to help an American lady.' Anne followed the French porter. Coward... Coward...

...

Two Y.M.C.A. men, two Red Cross men, an Engineer Captain, two Medics, talking about the merits of different gas masks. For half an hour, the train jolted onward. Then it stopped and stood two hours, quite still. Anne gazed out at a stubble field, a low hill. Her head ached fiercely. Joan... Joan... Getting late, later... Would they be furious in Neufchâteau that she had taken two weeks to come from Paris? No, two days... Two days a long time... Still, this was war... Nobody ever hurried...

...

Pitch dark. The train stopped. Still raining. No lights on the train, and no lights at the station. The Red Cross men in the compartment thought it was Neufchâteau, this place of muddy darkness. The Y. men thought it wasn't. There was no way of telling. Anne got out. She bumped into people as she lugged her bags along the platform, through the darkness. An old, old man in a dark smock appeared from somewhere. "C'est Neufchâteau?"

"Oui, Madame." He grabbed her bags. "Hôtel Agriculture?" he queried.

"Oui." She stumbled after him through the rain, the darkness. What sort of place would the Hôtel Agriculture be? With every step, her feet slipped. A door opened off a sidewalk into a dingy room, filled with smoke, lit by two candles. A high counter opposite the door, behind it, shelves of bottles. A desk, with an old Frenchman, peering at you over glasses. A flight of stairs that rambled up toward darkness. "Voilà l'Hôtel, Madame!" The porter thumped Anne's bags down.

"Miss Wentworth?" American voice,– here in this foreign barroom. A stoutish man in a Y. uniform came forward, his overseas cap well to the back of his head. "My name's Tompkins, L. C. Tompkins, of Great Bend, Iowa. What part of the States are you from?" Anne told him, Massachusetts. What could it possibly matter where you came from? "Pleased to meet you." Mr. Tompkins held his hand out. He felt at ease,– he and the lady had been introduced now... He had come, he explained, to greet her, and to tell her that Mrs. Phillips, the Regional Director, was off on an inspection. Anne was to wait in Neufchâteau till she came back. There was a room engaged for her upstairs, and the Y. ran a mess down the street that she would find real cosy. Mr. Tompkins hoped she'd be comfortable in their little town... Not quite like God's Country, but still, not a bad little place if you didn't mind mud... Mr. Tompkins, with another handclasp, bade her good night.

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Russian officers sat at tables in the hotel dining room, drinking champagne. They walked about the lobby, and up and down the stairs in high, black boots. Anne watched them in the dining room, while she waited. Hungry... After an hour, the serving woman brought her a stewed rabbit, fried potatoes, salade. She sipped red wine. French food,– good...

She stood in the doorway of the hotel after supper. Could not bear to mount that dingy stairway... Trucks rattled past, their engines snorting, great wheels splashing mud across the narrow sidewalk. Mud, littering the house walls, flattening, drooling downward. In the dark drizzle an American soldier stood in rubber coat and tin helmet, blowing a whistle, gesturing to the trucks to come or stop. A soldier crossed the street and strolled past Anne.

"Could you come to the station and carry my trunk for me?" Anne said.

"You bet your life I could," said the soldier.

...

The corridor of the Hôtel Agriculture had an evil smell, an eerie darkness. The smell met Anne at the landing as she followed the concierge up the stairway. In the old Frenchman's hand the candle flickered. A row of blue doors, closed, opposite each other. Outside each door, a pair of Russian boots,– huge, black, with their tops flopping over. Beside each pair of boots, perched under the shadowing tops, a pair of small, French slippers... One door with no shoes. Before this door the concierge set Anne's bags down. He pushed the door. In the small, boxlike room, the American soldier dumped Anne's trunk. He looked round. "Some apartment, this, I'll tell the world!" He laughed.

"It's a great war!" Anne said...

...

The footsteps of the soldier and the concierge died out. She was alone. Between the blue doors, the Russian boots, the slippers,– that atmosphere of maleness and femaleness... Nobody, within two hundred miles, who knew her. The door had no lock. Anne pulled and shoved the washstand out across it. She undressed, put the light out. She stood a minute in the open window. Rain, dripping on the helmet of the American M.P. standing down there. The soldier waved his arms, blew a shrill whistle. Trucks snorted past, splashing mud onto the walls of houses...

...

The morning. Raining. Anne hunted for the Regional Director's office. The woman must be back now,– better hurry... At last, she found it, upstairs in an old French house. She knocked. Hand trembling. Legs a little shaky. To try two lifetimes to get to the Zone of Advance, and now, at last, to get here... In ten minutes she would be starting on the Great Adventure... She knocked again. Stood, holding

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her breath... Downstairs, somewhere, she heard feet shuffling. A French woman in felt slippers, stopped at the foot of the stairway, looking up. "Pas là," she called, "pas là. Partie!"

"When is it that she will arrive?" Anne asked.

"Ah, that I do not know," the woman shrugged her shoulders, raised her eyebrows. "Dans quelques jours, peut-être,"[1] she said. Anne walked downstairs, slowly. Barnaby had waited for three weeks round Paris... She passed the French woman, went out into the rain. Remember that this was war... One mustn't hurry...

...

Wet. Outside the window, rain dripping... The M.P., blowing his whistle... Trucks, splashing mud across the sidewalk to the house walls... Anne sat on the bed in the boxlike room. From a peg on the wall her trench coat dripped water into a little puddle on the board floor. Her sodden hat hung on the water pitcher. What was it that one used to do with hours? Read? There were no longer any books in the world... Anyway, one couldn't keep one's attention on petty, made-up stories, on people, not real people. There was Joan, now... Anne bent over, pulled some paper from her suit case, put the suit case along her lap, and shook her fountain pen. What could one say to Joan? How could one write it? Good God...

...

She came to a green pasture, on a hilltop. The rain had stopped and everything glistened in the sun. Anne sat down on a rock and watched a goat that cropped grass. Somewhere above she heard the throb of engines. Five planes, flying in a great V, throbbing northward. Five golden dragonflies against the blue sky... Dragonflies that dropped bombs, made people sit in cellars... So much energy, so much money spent on killing... The white goat twitched at the grass, came nearer. Her bag was heavy, its teats bobbing outward. Below, in the valley somewhere, a mess call sounded. One could hear footsteps, hear the clank of mess kits. A little girl came to fetch the goat, to draw the good milk for her supper. Life, trying to go on... The little girl bobbed her head at this strange lady, who certainly had the air of being lonely... "Bonsoir, Madame!"

"Bonsoir," Anne said...

...

Night. Through the open window shrilled the American M.P.'s whistle. Trucks snorted, rattled. Gears grinding... Wheels splashing soft, brown mud against the house walls...

...

Morning. Anne walked out into the soft rain. In a uniform one must be military... Must go about with it dripping down one's neck. The soldier on the corner had his helmet. That shot the water outward, so that it hit him in the chest, the shoulders. Anne smiled at him

[1] 'In a few days, perhaps.'

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as she picked her way through frothy, churned mud. He laughed back. "Sunny France!" he shouted...

...

The French woman of yesterday stood in the doorway, still in felt slippers. Black hair, black eyes, black shawl, white face against the dark shadow in the hallway... Wooden shoes, waiting in the mud before the doorstep. "Pas encore revenue," the woman snapped. She watched Anne. What a nuisance to see the muddy feet of these young women always mounting and descending... Not infirmières, these young Américaines... No one, in fact, felt quite certain what they were ... Eh bien, if they could win the war for France, what did it matter?

...

Anne walked along the sloppy sidewalk. Nothing to do... Nobody to talk to... No place to go... Nothing to read... No use to write letters, there was no censor... You weren't allowed to mail them till they were censored... She bought a 'Paris Herald,' took it to her room. The bed was still disordered. Slop pail not emptied. She shut the window to keep out the M.P.'s whistle. Communiqués in the paper, telling nothing. The room, smelling musty... Letter from a Philadelphia lady saying she was anxious to know how to change Centigrade to Fahrenheit,– she had been anxious for the past year. She had been anxious for fifteen years, they told you. A sort of symbol of the 'Paris Herald'... Whew! This was like sitting in a rotten bandbox... Must get outside... She walked in the wet street, hands in her pockets. Rain trickled from her hat brim. Lucky they had given her two new ties... Somewhere a clock struck. Only ten. Good Heavens...

...

She came back to her room with wool and knitting needles. She opened the window. Trucks, making a perpetual vibration... The washbowl rattling with them... Casting on stitches. Keep one's hands going,– men used to knit in the Bastille... Through, around, and out ... Her mother had taught her long ago to do it. Through, around and out... 'You God damned son of a ...' The voice of the traffic soldier, yelling... 'Say, didn't you never hear a whistle before? Don't make no God damn difference if you *are* goin' to the front. Don't be in such a hurry!'

...

She felt an enormous need to talk to someone. She could not eat another meal alone here... Alone with Russians watching, drinking champagne... Leery eyes, those Russians,– and their women... She put on her wet hat, her damp trench coat... Went out, to hunt for the Y.M.C.A. mess. A stout man, paddling down the street in a Y. uniform. She'd follow him...

The place was hot, full of the smell of doughnuts. Middle-aged men came in, hung up dripping trench coats, rubbed their hands, told you what state they came from. Wentworth? Why there'd been a

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letter for you. They'd sent it back to Paris... Conversing,– trouble with the French people was, they didn't know how to cook. Now all you want for breakfast is just a coupla fried eggs and a little bacon,– the French can't even make that... 'Well, folks, let's eat...' Anne sat down,– corn bread, steaming. Her tongue felt funny. Hand, reaching toward the corn bread... Gosh... Gosh... 'Our Father,' Everyone looking at you. Anne scrambled to her feet. Gosh,– she'd forgotten that she was a Christian...

...

Anne sat alone in the hotel dining room that evening. She'd heard enough American for one day. Russians drinking champagne, sparring with their women... An American captain at a table in the corner... He kept staring at her. Nice man, no doubt, but she wished he wouldn't stare so... If only you didn't have to wait an hour for your dinner... It came at last. C'était la guerre, explained the waitress.

Nearly ten before Anne left the smoky dining room. Nothing to do but go to bed now... If only there were some one here that you could talk to... The American Captain stopped her on the stairway. Panting,– must have been running... His jaw working, strangely... Anne could smell brandy, but the man was sober.

"For God's sake," he grabbed Anne's wrist, "come to my room, will you?" His hand, gripped hers, trembling. She felt his nails, biting into her skin. His eyes on their two hands... Jaw trembling as he talked: "You're all alone. So am I. I'm going back to the front tomorrow. Back to that Hell,– Good God, I've got to have,– somebody,– this is my last night... Last night..." Anne pulled her hand. His glistening eyes met her startled grey ones. He let her hand fall. His eyes fell.

Anne looked down at him. Wanted to run, keep running... He stood there, on the step below her, cringing, lonely. His presence, standing there, made her feel sick. Yet she stood, looking at him. The hand that had gripped hers now gripped the stair rail. The nails were white. Not a bad sort, as men go...

"I'm all alone here," she said quietly, "among all these Russians. When I saw that there was an American officer in the hotel, I felt safer. Perhaps I was wrong." The man took off his overseas cap, stood twisting it between his fingers, looking at the step at Anne's feet. Looked young, now that he had his hat off... "You wouldn't want,–" Anne stopped. You couldn't lecture people... The man was blinking. Sniffing... Twisting his hat, muttering: 'My God, my God.' Trouble with men was, they never really grew up... When children wanted things, they always grabbed them... "Come, let's go downstairs and talk a while." She walked past him. He followed, like a dog that has been beaten...

They sat down on a wooden bench in the bar-room, their backs against the crumbling, mouldy plaster. A Russian officer leaned

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against the bar, sipping cognac. 'Tiens! Une liaison,' he said to the concierge. Anne asked the Captain what part of the states he came from. That was the way you began... California. Thank God, then they could talk about the climate... Nothing they could talk about that would not bore him... Once men had got to realities, they couldn't turn back... Yes, Anne always heard that it was a wonderful climate... 'Oui! Une liaison!' The Russian officer, winking at the concierge...

"You have a picture of your wife?" Anne asked the Captain,– this kind were always married... Single men were more or less used to going without,– Fumbling, the man pulled a picture out of his blouse.

"You know," he said, "somehow you remind me a little bit of my wife..."

...

"Good night," said Anne. She rose and held her hand out. An hour of talk about the wife, the children... The little boy went to school now,– he was poor at spelling. "Good luck!" she said. The Captain gripped her hand and shook it. He blinked and swallowed. She turned and walked away from him, up the dark stair. She turned at the landing. The man was standing back to her, at the street door. He jerked it open, strode out into the night...

...

Raining. The M.P. still blowing his whistle at the corner. More trucks that jolted, splashing. Another day. Anne rose and shut her window, poured chilly water into a chilly basin...

Y.M.C.A. Headquarters had not heard a word from Mrs. Phillips. But she'd be back,– she always came back... 'Keep smiling, Miss Wentworth! We came over here to put up with difficulties, with God's help we,–' Anne fled. God wouldn't help them... She wandered round the streets. Couldn't remember how many days she'd been here... She met a girl named Hill that she had known in college. Working for some corps surgeon or something up here... Was driving down to some base hospital or other, would Anne go with her?

"Sure," said Anne, "I don't care what I do now..."

...

The great Cadillac purred up a hill, through trees, out to a plateau. The road turned. They looked down into a cup-like valley. The bottom of the cup was filled with rows and rows of barracks. A huge town of barracks. 'All hospitals,' said Grace Hill.

Anne gasped. "But how can they want so many?"

"We're building more. There's only room for 20,000 wounded here now. Do you know how many the French have lost in the last four years? The Colonel had some French statistics the other day, to help to base his estimates for our army. They don't make them public. They've lost something like 1,200,000 killed. Let the whole A.E.F.

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drop dead right now, and you'd have it. And they've got about another million wounded. Do you know how many our Medical Department is getting ready for next winter? Four hundred thousand."

"Good Heavens. We'll be here all our lives," said Anne.

They swung into a side street, up a muddy hill, through a high gate. A gilded coat of arms, above the courtyard of a French château. 'Base H,' Grace Hill climbed out. 'You won't mind waiting round for a half an hour?' She dashed off, across an old paved floor, that shone with new wax.

Anne stepped into a spotless hall. 'MASTER HOSPITAL SERGEANT.' A dim familiarity about this... There had been a time, way back, when Anne had worked in a Base Hospital. She strolled into the Registrar's office, looked at the list of names. Allen, Aterbury, Caswell... Cohen... Donovan,– Anne's finger paused,– Captain James D., M.C., U.S.A. Fifth Marines. 'Joan of Arc, te-deedle-de-dum, Joan of Arc, te-deedle-de-dum,' her breath was going. Marines, dancing in the nurses' mess hall... Captain Donovan, the gay young Marine doctor. The one who used to bring the music, used to insist on having dances each week. A short, sandy, snub-nosed person, with a ready wit, and merry eyes that twinkled. She'd go and see him,– joke with him about the old days. That would be fun... The Registrar's orderly led her through shining corridors. Doors opened into pleasant wards. Officers in familiar pink bathrobes, sitting, chatting. Men in beds. The orderly turned in at a ward door, stopped.

"There's the Captain, sitting by his bed." A brisk nurse pointed. Anne couldn't see him. The man that the nurse pointed to was not the man that she knew... Queer there should be two Captain Donovans in the Marines... This man was thin, stoop-shouldered, with a white, saggy face, a mouth that drooped. Eyes that gazed at the floor in front of him. He sat with one arm on the bed, staring at his boots. Presently he seemed to see Anne watching him, and looked up. Eyes, like a lamp that's burning very low... Yet, something in them, somewhere, that flickered just a little... He recognized her, then, this strange, middle-aged man. "Miss Wentworth." He rose, slowly. An old, old man... There was no grasp in the hand he put in hers.

"You remember me?"

"Yes. Base Hospital F at Bordeaux..." His face was dull, expressionless. He didn't smile. "We used to dance together," he said, "God, what a long time ago that was!" They walked out into a little garden beyond the ward. Donovan stopped by a green, dripping bush, stood, tracing patterns in the moist sand of the path with his cane. "Things have happened since then. I doubt, now, if I could make my old legs push me." He did not smile. Had not smiled once. It was as if the muscles of his face were injured.

"I've seen some of your men in hospital in Paris," Anne said.

"Some of the best of them you haven't seen there," he said. "Nast

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is gone, and Hopkinson, and Merritt. Remember Merritt? God, what those boys went through!" He was looking at her now. Anger, resentment, smoldering... "There was a little field near Belleau Wood. We carried the boys back there. I had three corps men left. On one side of the field we put the ones we thought might live. And on the other side we put the ones we knew it wasn't worth while to send back. Sorted 'em out, the good ones from the bad ones. Just set them out there under the trees to die... And then went back to hunt for more..." Tears, rolling down the man's face, dripping... "We laid 'em there and left 'em under the trees." He drew a long, trembling breath. "They were our friends," he said. He blinked, turning his head away, walking slowly down the moist path. Anne walked beside him.

"The only thing that one can do about war is not to think about it," she said. "It gets unbearable, doesn't it, if you get thinking?"

"God! If I could stop thinking about it, I wouldn't be here," said Donovan. "I'm not wounded. I just got the flu, and somehow with all the others gone, I didn't care what happened. I let go. Here I am, good for nothing. 'Shell-shocked,'– yellow. It was good of you to come, Miss Wentworth!" Anne felt him shake himself, pull himself up. He turned and tried to smile. The effort only twisted the thin cheeks. His eyes couldn't,– His teeth caught at the lower lip that trembled. "It certainly was good of you," he said. "Sometimes I don't see how I can pull through unless I see someone from the outside, get something new to think about. My mail's been lost for six weeks... I wonder if somehow you could get me a book, or something?"

"I'll try to," Anne said...

...

The dining room again at the Hôtel Agriculture. The Russians, and their champagne, and their women. Stray American officers, come from the front, with mud on their boots. By the wall, a white-haired lady sitting, looking quaintly out of place here. Anne sat down at a table in the corner, waiting for dinner, watching the white-haired lady. It made her feel more proper, somehow, to see this woman. As if her own mother had suddenly appeared and sat there... The newcomer was in a uniform like Anne's. She rose, brushed the crumbs from her skirt, saw Anne, paused a second, and came forward.

"Miss Wentworth?" she said. Anne rose. Wonderful comfort in the older woman's handshake. One did miss older women... "I'm Mrs. Phillips," she said. "Sorry to have kept you waiting so long. Our truck broke down near Toul. I simply had to camp till it was mended. Perhaps you'll come up to my room after dinner?" Her face was white, and wrinkled. Palish blue eyes... Honest eyes...

"I'd like to," Anne said.

...

"Sit down," Mrs. Phillips said, "on the bed. No, it doesn't matter." She was sitting by the window, one thin hand resting on the sill, the

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dying light touching her fluffy, white hair. She too, was tired... "It'll seem to you, Miss Wentworth," she said dreamily, "that you're being sent out there as a cook. The thing you must remember is, that you're a sort of symbol. The men will tell you that you remind them of their wife, their sister..."

"I know," said Anne. "I've heard them."

"Then they'll say that their wife, or their sister wanted to come over, but that they wouldn't let them. That means that we remind them of something they hold a little bit higher than this life they're in over here," Mrs. Phillips smiled. "It means that there's something a little bit sacred to them about an American woman. We help, just a little bit, to keep that vision sacred." A pause. Then the calm voice went on: "You'll be trying to feed them. You'll find your stove won't work, or your supplies don't come. Don't get too discouraged. Do your best to fix it,— If you aren't efficient, or if you loaf, they won't respect you. But try to remember that it's just being there that counts most. If you can take one little spot in these great camps, and make it a place where they feel they mustn't swear, and spit, and shoot craps, then you've done something. A town full of soldiers is a rough place, Miss Wentworth! It isn't a place for a decent woman to live in until after a decent woman has come to live there. Then it becomes one. American men have standards. If we're any good, we remind them to live up to their own standards." The woman's pale face was lit by a strange enthusiasm.

"Do we?" said Anne.

"You'll find that the people at the head of our army," Mrs. Phillips said, "really have a high ideal. If you find trouble at the bottom, just remember that the people at the top are standing behind us." Anne rose to go. The woman's face seemed to shine through the pale light. "The things we women of the Y.M.C.A. spend our days trying to accomplish are tangible things, Miss Wentworth,— cocoa, and stoves, and sandwiches, and chairs to sit in. But the things that we really achieve, if we're any good, are intangible things..." Anne pressed the thin hand.

"Thank you," she said. "Good night..."

...

Night. Anne slept. She did not hear the M.P.'s whistle, nor trucks that rattled, nor the mud that splashed all night against the house walls...

...

"But where am I going?" Anne asked next morning. Mrs. Phillips sat in her office. A wide window, open, let in golden sunlight. On the sill a rose tree, opening a blossom. The French woman of the felt slippers, on her knees, polishing the waxed floor.

"Mrs. Scott up at the Air Depot at Avency-le-Sec wants to go home. You might take her place. I must telephone her. But I can't do it till

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two-thirty,– they won't let the Y. use the telephone except one hour each day. You may have to wait until tomorrow."

"C'est la guerre!" Anne laughed...

...

Anne found a note pinned on her door next morning. 'I'm sending you to Avency-le-Sec,' it said. 'There's a truck that comes down some time today for bread or something. Try to take that. E. P.' Anne wandered to the street. A sort of panic seized her. Afraid of Avency-le-Sec. Almost rather stay here, with the Russians, and their ladies...

"Air Service truck?" said the M.P. "You bet. Comes twice a week. He'll be round." Anne hurried to pack her bags. She stood, waiting, in the hotel doorway. "Better go get yer chow, he won't be here till afternoon," yelled the M.P. Anne turned and went in. Needn't have hurried...

...

After lunch, Anne stepped out on the sidewalk. She heard a long, shrill whistle. 'Hey, there!' the M.P., yelling at a truck that bounced past. 'What the Hell?' A lieutenant leaned from the truck, cap smartly to one side. 'Lady wants ter see yer.' The M.P. jerked his thumb across his shoulder. Anne stepped out into the muddy street. The Lieutenant was climbing down now, flushed, embarrassed. "Yes, Ma'am?" he was saying...

...

A straight, white road, up a long river valley, between two rows of tall trees. The truck jiggled, bounced, banged. On the front seat Anne sat wedged between Lieutenant Fitzpatrick of the Air Service and Kuntz, the soldier driver. Her legs dangled. She faced the swift breeze,– On a truck, nothing stuck up in front... You were being hurled into space... "That town over there," the Lieutenant pointed, "is called Dom Ramy. They say it's where Joan of Arc came from." The truck jiggled, snorted. Wind coming up at you. A river valley lay there, green and smiling. Across the fields the square tower of a little church rising from a cluster of red roofs, stood silhouetted against the oak woods. Sun gleamed from the tiny, winding river. Joan's father,– Anne's history, almost lost now,– had said he would rather throw his daughter in that river than that she should go out with the soldiers... "You're comfortable?" the Lieutenant next Anne, asking... Anne smiled.

"Yes," she said. "Thanks."

...

The truck slowed.

A narrow, muddy street, lined with low, plaster houses. Broad doors ajar. Houses with one room. Beside each door a great pile of manure, steaming. Brown juice from the manure trickling to the street, mingling with the mud that filled it. Mud, frothy, sloppy,

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churned up by a thousand truck wheels. Walking in the mud, American soldiers. French peasants, in wooden shoes,– but more American soldiers. A soldier leading a cow for an old woman. Soldiers standing in doorways, looking out of windows. Bending their heads, as if French doors were too small... A café, with little tables on the mud before it. Through the open window, American soldiers sitting at tables, drinking, talking to a girl with red hair. "Avency the Dry!" said the Lieutenant.

In the street a soldier in a tin hat blew a whistle. The truck lurched. They turned into a side street, down through a valley, out of the town, toward the sunset. Up a low hill, with little wooden shacks along it, painted in blotches of green and buff and yellow, divided by black lines. Gears crunched as the truck rolled out along the hilltop. Then, suddenly, below Anne lay a broad plain, all tawny yellow in the slanting sunshine. In a half circle at her feet stood airplane hangars, huge tents, opening generous doors toward the great field. On the field airplanes, poised like magic insects, a double row of them along the worn grass. Beyond, in the far distance, two great purple hills with flat tops. And near these hills dim shapes, cigar-like, floating.

"See, the sausage balloons out on the lines..." Fitzpatrick pointed. Anne was looking upward, head back. An airplane circled, circled in the sunlight coming downward. She held her breath. The thing was overhead, now, noiseless, swooping. A man waved a white flag somewhere out on the golden stubble of the great field. The plane passed overhead, swiftly, darting downward. It touched the field and bounded, like the light seed of a milkweed, touched it again, bounding, slower, slower, rolled over to the hangar. "O-oh!" said Anne...

The truck turned up a low hill through a street lined with barracks. Stopped, at the edge of an enormous wheat field. Out in the middle of the field, a building, like a big barn, painted in curious splotches of brown and green and yellow... "Here we are." The Lieutenant led Anne across a field toward the barn thing. They dodged behind a sort of board screen at the entrance. 'To keep the light in,' the Lieutenant was explaining...

The place smelt of damp boards, and stale tobacco. The great, dank, boardy place was full of soldiers. Mud, trodden onto the floor, a solid, brown coat. On top of the mud lay bits of greased paper, screwed up, and cigarette butts. Soldiers sat in piazza chairs, talking, smoking. Soldiers sat on benches, looking at the ground, and doing nothing. Soldiers who could not find a bench stood, smoking. "HAVE YOU WRITTEN TO MOTHER TODAY?" a sign said. Anne walked past, following the Lieutenant. There was a broad opening in the wall, behind a counter. Through the opening, Anne could see a kitchen. The Lieutenant took her through a door into the kitchen. 'Mrs. Scott?' he was calling.

"Come right in," a pleasant voice came from a little room beyond the

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kitchen. A tiny room, with grey walls. On benches at either side of a narrow table officers sat, with tea cups, talking, laughing. From a straw armchair in the corner a woman, in a blue canteen apron, got up, came forward. They were all laughing. More like a house party than like a war, this..., "I'm so glad you've come." Mrs. Scott drew Anne by the hand into the small room, "Now I can go home."

"No, we won't let you, Mrs. Scott," the officers were saying, "you must both stay. Two isn't too many! Why, there's two thousand men here. Have some tea Miss,– Miss,– America?"

"Thank you," said Anne...

...

She was still drinking tea, eating small, sugar cookies. Strange to go back to a life of sugar cookies... Pleasant young officers kept passing you another and another. Like a dream,– this, or like the U.S. Anne ate cookies. It gave you an excuse for saying nothing. These people had their own jokes. You couldn't understand them... You felt so queer coming so suddenly from France into a genial summer camp full of Americans like this... Talking about being lost in the sky, these men... As if the sky were an everyday place... 'You always know where you are when you get over Toul,' said one of them, 'that great big Red Cross on the roof of the Toul station,–'

"But I thought," Anne, timid,– everyone looking at the new girl,– "A Red Cross,– I thought that meant a hospital, or something," she said. The aviators laughed.

"That means," they said, "you aren't supposed to bomb it."

"But the Germans," said the new girl, "how can they tell whether it's a hospital or whether it's a station?"

"Oh, they know," laughed a pilot, "tracks go into stations,–" He looked at something over Anne's head. Then, suddenly, they all stopped and sat, looking. A tall young man stood in the doorway. Anne's eyes met his. He, too, was from the outside... He, too, felt shy, embarrassed,– in spite of the assurance in the angle of his overseas cap. There was a long, lithe, grace about his body. He stood there, the supple fingers of one hand against the door jamb, bright, dark eyes taking the room in, his head a little bent as if to avoid hitting the door top as he came in. The man next Anne stood up. The others stood up. 'Hoffman' said someone. Anne watched him as he shook hands with Mrs. Scott. Hoffman, America's famous ace... Hoffman... Heavens... 'Miss Wentworth has just come from Aviation Headquarters at Paris,' Mrs. Scott was saying. The tall young man sat down in the empty seat next Anne.

"And what do they say at Headquarters about the Nieuports?" he asked. The others, quiet, listening. This was Hoffman...

"They're trying to get more from the French," said Anne.

"More? Do they know that when you dive, the wings get loose and dump you?" said Hoffman.

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"They know the pilots don't like them,—"

"Don't like them!" Hoffman laughed. "That's good! You know, we up here sometimes wonder what goes on in Paris! Too bad you didn't get here for the ball, Miss Wentworth."

"The ball?" This *was* a house party, and not a war, then...

"The ball the General gave over at Toul for those two girls of his. It was a great party!" Fitzpatrick opposite, raised one eyebrow. 'Ye'ah. We heard it was,' he said. The others laughed. Hoffman laughed too. A soldier poked his head around the door jamb.

"Be with you in a minute, Samson," Hoffman rose. "I certainly have enjoyed this tea, Mrs. Scott. First meal I've had since breakfast." He shook hands with Anne. "Nice to see someone from the civilized world." From the kitchen, where she had gone for more hot water, Anne watched the tall, graceful figure swing across the hut. Mechanics, sitting there turned their heads. 'Hoffman,' they murmured...

"See that guy?" A mechanic with greasy hands leaned on the counter. He pointed to the tall, slim figure disappearing, into the maze before the doorway. "He come down with an awful flop onto the field today. The wings come off his Nieuport. It's down there now, you can see it." Anne followed the man toward an open window, looked out across the tops of barracks, down to the great field. The bright plane lay there, twisted, like a crumpled-up umbrella. "Hoffman shot down a German Albatross, chock full of pictures," the mechanic went on. "We've just been out on a truck and fetched her in here. I heard him tellin' the Major that just after he got the Albatross, a bunch of Fokkers come down on him out of the sun. He dove, and his wings got loose, like they do on them planes. He just managed to scrape across C Hangar and come down on our field..."

"Funny, he didn't say a word about it," Anne said...

...

"That's our billet!" Mrs. Scott laughed. They walked toward a tent that stood on the broad, stubble field behind the canteen. A rubber tub, half full of soapy water stood on the tent floor. Beyond it two canvas cots, an army trunk, a suit case. A gas mask and a steel helmet lay on a shelf. Clothes lay in piles on the floor. "If you want to wash your hands, there's the tub," Mrs. Scott sat down on the straw mattress of a cot, and lit a cigarette. "At home, I have a perfectly decently kept house." She laughed again. "Here I just try to keep my temper, and put as much food as possible inside the soldiers. It's just like throwing things into a bottomless pit. You make twenty pounds of bread into sandwiches and they're gone in no time. You can't possibly make enough to feed two thousand. But we'd better go eat."

The broad field behind the tent was cultivated in broad, undulating ridges. They walked across them toward a little hill. To the left, below them lay the rows of barracks, the road, the flying field. To the right, across a valley, the plaster houses of the French town glowed

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yellow in the setting sunlight. A dampness, rising from the hollows... Above, an airplane circled, soaring, tipping on one wing. "You'll find these officers are a good crowd," said Mrs. Scott. "Be nice to them,— They're just as lonely as the men are. Then, too, they'll lend you trucks so you can get things. That's important. The Y. used to have twelve trucks at the warehouse in Neufchâteau, and sometimes they'd send things out here, but now the army's taken all but three of their trucks. So if you want supplies, you've got to get 'em yourself."

Two lieutenants sat outside a long, low shack, playing with three fuzzy, staggery puppies. Fitzpatrick, of the bread truck, jumped up, came to meet them, held a door open.

Chairs rattled. Thirty young men got up, stood in rows on either side of a long, narrow table. Young, healthy faces, bronzed from outdoors. Faces embarrassed, bowing one by one, toward Anne. Mrs. Scott, perfectly calm, telling their names... They sat down at last. Anne didn't feel so queer, now... They passed her tough beef, gravy, potatoes, salad. She ate, listening to the young men talking, laughing. 'D'ju go over to 87 this morning?' the man next her, asking... 'Ye'ah,' a young boy across the table reached for the potatoes.

"How's Bob?"

"Dead," replied the other. "Have a potato, Miss Wentworth, you haven't had one. Sladen was making up the mess account," he went on, "found he went fifty dollars in the hole last month." Everyone laughed. "They've got one Spad over there," the boy said. "Hoffman flew down to Orly Field and stole it." Again everyone laughing... Anne, laughing...

"Say!" said Fitzpatrick, "that'll fool that gang down there in Paris..."

...

It was growing dark when Anne and Mrs. Scott walked back. The rows of barracks that had been there when they walked up, seemed to have melted... Anne could see nothing, now, but grey mist. The sounds of soldiers' voices, coming from nowhere... The canteen itself had vanished... Then, suddenly, it rose up before them, a great, dark shape... Somebody pushed a door open. A yellow light shone from the little kitchen. A soldier, young, rosy-faced, held the door back: 'Say, I been stirrin' your cocoa for you, Mis' Scott...'

Mrs. Scott hung her hat and coat up, put on her apron, rolled her sleeves up. She and the soldier lifted heavy trays of sandwiches to the counter, lifted the heavy marmite of cocoa and set it on a box near the window. 'All right, let's go!' the soldier shouted. He opened up the window between the kitchen and the hut. Before the counter stood a soldier, grinning. Behind him, another... And behind him... And so on, till the line lost itself in the dim light. 'When do we eat?' they shouted.

"Say, you got a new K.P. in here." The first man slammed his franc

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down, taking his mug of cocoa. Anne smiled. So you had to make change in centimes? Heavens... And pour out cocoa and push out sandwiches at the same time? In Paris they had silver... How much was this worth? Heavens...

The men in line watched her. New girl didn't know a franc from fifty centimes... Neat, but not pretty... And inefficient... Didn't savvy how to keep the cocoa from drippin' on the oilcloth... It was gettin' all over the counter in a brown pool... Slow about the change, too... Didn't know no better than to grab your money before she shoved you your drink,— 'If she'd a done that way in a real bar, you'd a throwd your glass...'

Anne worked, bewildered. Cocoa almost finished... Ten sandwiches left. The crate at her feet, that had been full of packages of cookies, empty. She looked out into the hut. The line of khaki-colored figures still stretched round the corner. Still they came. She felt them, looking at her. 'You ain't goin' to leave us?' they shouted, anxiously, at Mrs. Scott... The sandwiches were gone. Disappointment clouded the face before Anne. 'Too late again!' The soldier turned. She would make twice as many when she was boss here... The cocoa was gone. She would make two barrels, instead of just one. She would clear up that filthy floor there... Soldiers spitting on it. How they stared at you over their mugs of cocoa... Made you feel like an actress, on a stage here...

An aviation mechanic sat down before a battered old piano. It jangled out a tune under his clever fingers. A hundred men's voices caught the tune up:

"Good Ma-a-a-awning, Mr. Zip, Zip, Zip,"

they sang. Anne went over to the piano. You couldn't help singing...

"With your hair cut just as short as,
Your hair cut just as short as..."

The mechanic at the piano pushed over, still playing, and made room for her on the piano stool. He looked down at her, smiling, singing, banging the keys. Life, his eyes saying, just a joke... A thousand voices seemed to have joined in, booming from dark corners. The whole, smoky hut vibrated with sound. Everything closed,— you were shut in here with it. Soldiers all about you, light from the sputtery kerosene lamp touching their faces, faces, bodies, swaying gently in cadence with the music. The eyes of all of them on your face.

"There are smiles that make you happy,
There are smiles that make you blue,
There are smiles that drive away the tear drops,—"

Men grinning at you, joking... A lilting rhythm...

"As the sunbeams drive away the dew.
There are smiles that have a tender meaning,
That the eyes of love alone can see,—"

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Men's feet, pounding the floor, in time... Men laughing, as they sang...

"But the smiles that fill my heart with gladness,
Are the smiles that you give to me..."

And so,– an evening...

...

Straw mattress... No sheets... Blankets, fuzzy, all about your chin ... Anne turned over. Your hips stuck in when you turned over, jolted the cot, and made the floor creak. You didn't mind discomfort. That was what you once thought War would be like. Only you didn't sleep very well just at first. Get used to it... Tin hat and gas mask on top of the shelf in the corner were yours. Put 'em on, if you heard a gun go, Mrs. Scott said... Not that steady boom, boom... That was only the guns along the front. This one would be nearer. Airplane with the wings falling off it... Smug, middle-aged men sitting in red plush armchairs... Mirrors, red carpets... 'Do they know that when you dive the wings rip off and dump you?' Airplane, lying like a crumpled-up umbrella. Men waiting for food, and no more food to give them... Frazzled paper money... Tired... 'There are smiles that make you...' Tired... Tired... 'Happy...'

...

Where was she? She sat up in the darkness. All alone. Seemed to be outdoors. Men's voices talking somewhere, right close, at her elbow. Yet she was undressed... 'Gimme one o' them God damned rubber sheets...' the man was saying...

"My God, where am I?" She strained her eyes through the darkness. A square hole flapped in a cold breeze that chilled her shoulder. The window of a tent. Tent behind the Y.M.C.A. at Avency-le-Sec... She had come that afternoon... 'Gimme a chaw of your God damned plug, will yer?' went the man's voice at her elbow. The floor creaked. That was Mrs. Scott, rolling over in bed.

"That's the machine gunners," Mrs. Scott murmured, sleepy. "They sit out there watching for German bombers."

"Thanks," said Anne. "I'd sort of forgotten where I was." The straw mattress crunched as she lay down.

...

"Water!" Somebody, stamping on the platform, outside the tent door. "Wait a minute!" Mrs. Scott was putting on her overcoat. Two soldiers came in and dragged the rubber tub toward the doorway, picked up a pail that stood under the table. Slosh, on the grass, outside. They came in, carrying water, filled the tub up, talking. Swell day today, they'd tell the world!

"Isn't it?" said Mrs. Scott, "I suppose we'll be bombed."

...

Dew on the grass. Everything shining. Y.M.C.A. hut, shining under its garish brown and green and buff and black paint. A curl of

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blue smoke rising from the stove pipe. Curls of blue smoke rising from the mess shacks of the squadrons. Airplanes, perched like bright insects along the great, golden field below them. Trucks snorting, racket of donkey engines. Near-by sounds, driving away the steady boom of big guns. Men, tiny midgets in the distance, pushing planes out of hangars, onto the great field. Over the field, the white sleeve billowing in a clear breeze from the northwest. Blue hills, leading northward, growing paler. Beside them, a row of pale cigars, poised. Anne drew a deep breath. Why, it was beautiful! You felt like running... Felt like singing... The front! Not the way you thought it would be. Nothing, in war, the way you thought it would be...

...

The Y.M.C.A. man stood warming his hands at the stove, waiting for breakfast.

"Don't you think we might clean the floor up in the hut, and make it look a little bit neat?" Anne asked, as she made toast.

"It isn't any use," said Mr. Simpson. "I've swep' it up time and again," he added, sadly, "the boys just throw things down, and after a while it looks just the same way..."

"But if we put scrap baskets,–" Anne stopped. A short, stout man in a Y. uniform came in smiling, rubbing his hands. So there were two of them...

"Er, shake hands with Mr. Carberry," said Mr. Simpson, "he's our Educational Director." Mr. Carberry's hand was small and dry and hard to get ahold of. 'And what state are you from?' he was chirping...

"You hold classes?" Anne asked.

"Ahem. Well, er, not yet," said the Educational Director. "Ain't got any books yet. But I've sent for 'em." 'Come on! Come on!' Mrs. Scott was setting corn meal mush, a steaming pot of coffee on the table in the little back room. "Our Father," said the Y.M.C.A. man, bowing his head. Anne bowed hers. It was Mrs. Scott who ought to be thanked...

...

"The Major's compliments to Mrs. Scott,"– a soldier stood in the door, saluting, grinning, "and he hopes that she and Miss Wentworth will ride to Nancy with him."

"Thank him very much, Robeson. Tell him we'll go." Anne pushed her chair back. Shucks... She was ready to roll her sleeves up.... Sweep up the mud and papers... "We'd better go," said Mrs. Scott. "If we don't, then they won't give you a truck to go in when you want to."

"Oh, I see," Anne said...

...

Major MacDonald was a huge man, splendid in the fur collared overcoat of a pilot. With him trotted a small, sandy-haired lieutenant. Anne sank back between the Major and Mrs. Scott on the Cadillac's

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back seat. Fields and woods whizzing past. And small towns. The Major telling stories,– leaving out parts... You could tell by the color of the Lieutenant's ears when things were left out... The Cadillac purring as it took the low hills. Adventure...

...

A tiny Paris. An hour and a half to shop before lunch. Why, that house at the corner had fallen into its own cellar... It lay, a heap of rubbish behind its vacant windows. French women, walking to market with their string bags... Above, in the blue sky, tiny white clouds like little feathers, floating... Anti-aircraft, bursting,– but the women with the string bags never looked up... "First, let's get a shampoo and a wave," said Mrs. Scott.

...

Anne stopped under a grilled iron gateway in the Place Stanislas. A girl in a fawn-colored uniform was strolling in the park with a lieutenant, sun catching his spurs. The girl led a white dog by a leash. She looked up. "Hel-lo!" Rose McPherson bounced toward Anne. She introduced the Lieutenant. She hooked her arm in Anne's. "Come and lunch with us."

"I'm meeting the Major at,–"

"At Walter's. I know! Everyone lunches at Walter's,– it's the best food in France. Oh, Anne, too bad you didn't get here for the dance! It was *such* fun! What you laughing at, Anne?"

"It's a great war!" said Anne.

...

Walter's, low-ceiled, mirrored, full of a pleasant buzz of conversation. 'The drive,– when that starts I'll...' 'I want to get there before the drive begins, you know...' The drive,– You heard it at all the tables. A buzz, a pleasant excitement... "Here you are!" The sandy-haired Lieutenant led Anne to a table, where the Major and Mrs. Scott sat.

"They've got no business talking about the drive," the Major was saying in a loud voice, "if there was a spy in here, he'd certainly have a hunch there's going to be one. Ah, here's Miss Wentworth!" Across the table, Mrs. Scott was laughing.

"It's a great war!" she said.

...

"What a good lunch!" Anne said as they went out. "You don't enjoy yourself like that in Paris, you're always conscious of the wounded. Here you feel that everyone's having the best time." She looked up. The Major was pointing with his riding whip toward the white clouds. Against the blue space between there sailed a tiny black speck.

"A German Albatross, takin' pictures," said the Major. The tiny black speck shot upward and disappeared behind a white cloud.

...

Grey dawn. Rain pattering against the canvas, dripping through

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over Anne's suit case, plop, plop. Damp mist, blowing through the flapping windows.

"Good-bye." Mrs. Scott was starting back to Paris. Anne watched her sliding, slipping through the pink mud. A soldier with a wheelbarrow followed with her trunk. Paris... A million miles off... Anne crawled back between the damp, rough blankets. One always heard that it rained at the front. Here it was, raining. One didn't mind rain. Hard to go to sleep, though, with that constant pattering so close to one's head. Paris,– the familiar streets, houses to sleep in, pavements to keep the mud back... Come, now! One didn't want to go to Paris. Wanted to be here. The rain, dripping through the canvas onto one's clothes. Too damp to get up again and move them... Why didn't those soldiers come, and bring the water? Time to get up anyway, whether or not they brought you any water. Horrid feeling, just to put damp clothes on. You'd be the only woman among two thousand men, now...

...

The mud stuck to your feet, sucked at your rubbers. You had to keep kicking your feet out in front to throw the junks off. The mud smelling rather like a dead mouse. So many generations of people had killed each other and got buried in it... Slithering across tiny particles of Gauls, of Romans, Germans, Huns, French, English,– and more Germans. Thousands of years... Horrid, evil-smelling mud, sticking to your feet...

Anne jumped across a muddy lake outside the kitchen. In one end of the lake, the wood pile, being submerged. Its pieces, floating. The kitchen, full of smoke. Mr. Simpson was leaning over the stove and blowing. He straightened up, tears in his eyes, blinking. The wood was so wet, he explained, that he hadn't been able to make the stove go. He usually put the coffee on, but today the boys hadn't brought any water to fill the pot up. The shelf by the stove was littered with white china mugs, sticky with last night's cocoa. "Morning, folks!" Mr. Carberry bounced in, smiling. "Breakfast most ready?" He stood, rubbing his small hands...

"Good morning," Anne said. Nice if one could kill him... "You haven't any water in your room, by any chance?" Carberry had. He kep' it there fer washin'. He ran and got it. She poured it on the coffee. "Perhaps you'd set those marmites outside the door," Anne said, measuring corn meal. "We might collect a little rain for washing dishes." Carberry stood still, looking at the big cans.

"I'm the Educational Director," he said. "I ain't supposed to,–" This new girl, lookin' at him, kind of funny... He took hold of the handle of a can and began pulling. "Didn't come over here to do this sort o' work,– you know."

"Nobody's doing what they came over here to do," said the new girl...

...

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A little French boy named Pierre came each day to do the errands. The boy was solemn, pink-faced, with a loose curl that dangled on his forehead. "Say to M. le Commissaire that we must have forty loaves of bread instead of twenty," Anne told him, in her best French. The boy shook his head: "Non compris."

"Madame dit..." Berthe, the French girl who also came to assist, rattled it off to him in quick, dry French. The little boy turned serious, grey eyes toward Anne: "But if I say it to him," he said slowly, "he will not understand me. He understands nothing, M. le Commissaire!"

"Say to him, 'For Tee,'" said Anne, "'fortee.' Comme ça. Try!" Pierre shook his solemn, rosy face. He turned, and trudged off.

"Je ne peux pas tourner ma langue comme ça!" [1] he said.

...

The morning, slipping by, and still no water. The rain water that had collected was not enough properly to wash the cups. Yet, in two hours, hundreds of men would stand there lined up, waiting to see what the new Y. girl could do. Anne sliced bread, violently. A nightmare, this...

"Please Ma'am," a voice across her shoulder, "could we have some breakfast." Two soldiers stood there, muddy. "We just came in from the front," they said, "on a truck."

"Sure," Anne waved the soldiers into the back kitchen. She poured out what there was left of the coffee, cut thick slices of bread, opened a can of jam, ladled out the rest of the breakfast corn meal.

"Say, buddy, we ain't had a feed like this in two years!" The men sat, grinning at each other, eating, smiling at Anne like two children. Anne smiled, slowly. Feeding hungry, human creatures... What you'd been meant, all these thousands of years, to do... You knew it...

"I have no water to make my cocoa. Where can one get water in this camp?" Anne asked.

"They got lots of it down to the 36th Squadron's kitchen. Got any pails?" said one of the soldiers, cheerful. A guy could do anythin' after a breakfast like that... "Pitcher? Show us the pitchers!" Anne followed the two soldiers across the muddy streets between the barracks, carrying big, white pitchers. Back and forth, three times...

"Who won the war?" yelled someone, through a window...

...

Slicing twenty loaves of bread, spreading them with marmalade from a tin can. Opening thirty tin cans, one by one, with a can opener that slipped and jabbed one's fingers. Emptying sticky condensed milk into the cocoa barrel on the stove... Smashing packing boxes with one's foot, and ramming splintery pieces of wood into the four-inch fire box of the French stove... Blowing until one's eyes wept... Stirring cocoa. Wondering if it was ever going to boil... Anne's face

[1] 'I cannot twist my tongue like that!'

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flushed. She worked feverishly, dropping things, wondering if there weren't some better method. The door opened. Six officers from the Supply Department filed into the back room, sat down, lit cigarettes, and waited. "These officers came each morning for their coffee," Berthe said. Fortunately there was a tiny kettle of water on the stove for washing dishes. Anne made the officers cups of instantaneous coffee...

"Sit down, Miss Wentworth," said Fitzpatrick. "Don't be in such a hurry. Gee, whiz, I don't know how we'd get on without this meal. When you have breakfast at six-thirty, you know,–" Anne couldn't sit. She went on, feverishly, spreading jam. At quarter past eleven she looked out the doorway into the main hut. Already a line of forty men stood... Eleven twenty-nine... Anne slapped together the last, sticky, sandwich. She and Berthe staggered across the kitchen with the great barrel full of cocoa. No more sandwiches than usual... Rather less cocoa... But at least, thank God, the canteen would be open...

...

'See, hold it like this.' Anne stood in the long line of soldiers that waited outside the 36th Squadron kitchen. She held the shallow, oval, aluminum dish before her by its long handle. Along its side she balanced its shallow cover. 'You want to keep yer thumb tight, else half yer chow'll go in the dirt,' the boys said. Anne laughed. In her other hand she held a large, tin mess cup. 'When do we eat?' the boys yelled. Mess kits rattled. The line moved slowly. 'Three beans in a mess kit,' the boys said to Anne, smiling. Somehow, you felt that they were glad to see you... Warming to feel that... Plop. Potato splashed onto the bottom of the mess kit. The cook-soldier was clever with the great spoon. He threw food and he hit a mess kit each time. Same motion that one used to cast a trout fly... The next cook throwing junks of meat, and hitting the potato. Beans, slopping over the whole thing. The balanced cover, getting tippy, with corn syrup, two thick slices of bread. Corn syrup dripping down all over the beans. Whole business wobbling.

"Hey there! Your cup!" Anne held her cup up. The smell of coffee. ... The handle,– good God! Hot, black stuff splashing all over your skirt, warming your cold foot. Anne gave a little shriek. Everyone laughing... A soldier, edging along a bench to give her a seat...

"Here, take my coffee, sister," he was saying...

...

A barrel full of greyish-looking water perched over a little fire on the mud. Soapsuds round the edge, and on top blobs of shiny grease, that floated, beans, bits of potato, bits of gristle that men had spit out... Anne got in line, sozzled her mess kit in the barrel, and in another barrel, slightly cleaner, that stood beyond it. Forty soldiers' mess kits in the barrel before yours, and forty after. More beans,

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more bits of potato after each one. 'So long,' the boys were saying. Anne walked back to the Y., her spoon and fork and knife clanking inside her mess kit. She liked it... Even the soft rain, that moistened her face...

...

"Ils se moquent de nous, Mademoiselle," Berthe said. She did not like following the Américaine through the mud, carrying two heavy pitchers full of water. Here were already eleven trips that she and Mademoiselle and Pierre had made. "Can't help it," Anne said. One must get water... One couldn't let the soldiers down the first day... They slithered across the kitchen floor, shiny with mud. The dish pan, and the two marmites were full now. Anne prodded the can opener into the first of fourteen waiting tin cans. She sucked her finger to take away the blood... If only tin cans were not so hard to open... The kitchen door opened. Good God, already the officers were coming in for their tea.

...

Evening. Anne plunged alone into the darkness that lay between the officers' mess and the canteen. The officers had asked for Mrs. Scott. 'What? Left us?' Disappointment on the two rows of faces lit by the candles stuck into beer bottles... They hadn't liked her at first, they had confided, but now,– nobody could take her place...

"I don't suppose so," Anne said.

...

The canteen,– where was it? She peered ahead, into the mist, grey-black, elusive. She dragged her feet through clinging, sticky mud. Tomorrow she would count the cultivated ridges that lay between the canteen and the hill... Know just how many ups and downs before you turned off... Suddenly a barrack loomed in the mist before her. She felt her way along it, hunting for a door. No door on this side. A corner,– ah, there was a sea of mud, wood floating in it. The kitchen...

...

The kitchen was empty, unlit. The soldier who had used to come each night, and stir the cocoa for Mrs. Scott, sat outside in the hut, morose. Afraid of this new girl... Mrs. Scott,– she was like your mother,– you liked to help her... But this here new one,– she was more like your girl friend. Kinder scar't to go right in and begin... Lonely, too, to set out here, with all these God damn soldiers... A feller sure did like to see a woman...

Anne groped her way across the kitchen. The cocoa would be burned... No, the stove had gone out. Matches were, were... She couldn't find them. She opened the door between the kitchen and the hut. A line of soldiers stood before the window. 'When do we eat?' they shouted. She lit a lamp, hung up her dripping coat, sniffed at the cocoa. A nauseous smell. It must have burned before the stove went

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out then... How was she going to move it? Suddenly a huge man stood in the doorway. His bulk filled the whole door, and yet the face on top of the broad shoulders was a boy's face. A tanned face... Keen, brown eyes, that met Anne's, and stayed there... A sergeant's stripes on the sleeve, above the big hand. "I ain't never done K.P. before in this man's army, but I reckon I'm goin' to begin now," the man said.

"Come in," said Anne. He stood at the stove beside her. He seemed to fill the room up. She noticed how smoothly shaved he was, how clean his great hands. He laid one of them on the handle of the marmite. "Say," he said, "do you want this thing over by the counter?"

"Yes. I'll help you..."

"Look outa the way." He picked up the enormous can, walked with it... He opened the counter window for her and stood beside her, pouring cocoa while she made change. 'Got a new job, Mac?' the soldiers called in to him...

"Best one I had yet," he answered... 'See you got Sergeant MacLeod hisself doin' K.P.,' they said to Anne. The Sergeant got a cloth and wiped the counter. The cups gave out. He stepped into the hut, collected dirty ones, and washed them for her. Laughed as he slammed them, dripping on the counter. "Say, there ain't anythin' you can't do when you have to, is there?" he said.

...

The rush was over. MacLeod had brought a box and cracked it, and was making a fire in the stove, dry wood underneath, wet wood on top, making it burn. Anne watched him. The kind of man who could control things... Outside someone was playing the piano, a few voices singing. Not exactly like last evening's singing...

'Mademoiselle from Armentières, pa-a-arlez vous...'

MacLeod straightened up a moment, listened. Then he bent over the draught of the stove again, fixing it, somehow. His head was sideways, listening. The men's voices drawled on:

'Sir, have you got a daughter fair, pa-a-arlez vous...'

MacLeod straightened up, turned, walked swiftly out into the hut.

'Sir, have you got a daughter fair, pa-a-arlez vous...'

The music jangled on.

'Sir, have you,–'

It stopped, suddenly. Silence outside. Halfway down the hut a man laughed. Anne saw McLeod stroll up in front of the man, casual, say something, jerking his head backward toward the main door. The soldier stood a second, his jaw thrust forward, leering up at the solemn, boylike face above him. MacLeod stirred not a muscle. He stood there, quiet, hands dangling at his side. Again he gave a quick jerk of his head backward. Then the fingers of his big hands curled up, slowly. The man before him shuffled toward the doorway, disappeared behind the barricade there...

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Presently MacLeod was back in the kitchen again, tinkering with the stove. "Think I may be able to fix this here thing so it'll go," he said.

"Thank you," said Anne.

...

It rained the next day. Again, Anne found, the water had not come. Mr. Simpson did not understand it. He'd gone over to the Post Supply himself yesterday... Anne waded through mud to the Post Supply herself. She found a smiling corporal. He surely would talk to the Lieutenant about it when the Lieutenant came back, he told her. The Lieutenant had gone to Toul,— 'Sometimes,' he said, 'it takes him quite a spell to git back...'

"Oh, I see," Anne said...

...

Anne made forty pounds of sandwiches instead of twenty. Nobody wanted them. There wa'n't no cocoa to drink with 'em. 'What, no cocoa?' they asked, one after another, and turned, and walked off. 'This God, damn, Y...' Anne swallowed hard. Why should you care whether you fed the creatures? 'What, no cookies?' Geoffrey used to say, long, long ago, to Sarah...

...

Anne counted the ridges on the way to mess that evening. Later, coming back through the black rain, they helped her. She went over thirty-four broad bumps and hollows, followed the thirty-fifth hollow until the canteen loomed up in the darkness. You never knew, in peace, how much lights helped you... MacLeod was in the kitchen. He had kept the fire going, warmed the pudding. He took Anne's wet coat and hung it on a new nail near the stove. There was protection in his broad, square shoulders... Safety in the solemn tanned face... Private Hopkins, of the Post Office, came in to bring Anne a letter. He was a smooth-faced fellow, his black hair oiled back, shining. He sat down at the stove, and put his feet up.

"Say, Mac, you ain't goin' to be the only K.P. around here," he said.

Anne had made bread pudding, very sweet. She sold it cheap. The third soldier in line looked at it, and turned away. "Just like the God damned Y. to send a girl up here who don't even know how to make cocoa," he said. The line dispersed, suddenly. The soldiers began walking out into the darkness. This God damn new girl...

"Good Heavens, they're getting to hate me," Anne said.

"Let 'em go," said MacLeod. "They'll come back."

"They gotta come back," said Hopkins, brightly, "there ain't no other place in this whole camp where you kin set down..."

...

In the night the rain stopped pattering on the canvas. Its stopping woke Anne. Could it have cleared off? She got up, stole, barefoot, across the damp boards to the tent door. A cool wind was blowing

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luminous, white clouds across a starry sky. In the sky, suddenly, the racket of a motor, like an express train, coming nearer. Between her and the stars a great, dark shadow moving. A huge, black thing mounting, mounting into the night, showing a green light.

"God damn this belt!" A man's voice, close behind her. Anne started.

"Say, don't shoot him, you God damn... That's one o' them British bombers." Anne breathed again. All right... Somewhere in the darkness the machine gunners were unlimbering their gun. She wouldn't be entirely alone now, on the mud plain... Feet cold... She crept back, through the darkness, to the hard bed...

...

Morning, cold and clear. Same old rubber tub, with same old water. You didn't mind about the washing, but the cocoa,– got to get water today, somehow, or go home...

...

Anne started to sweep the hut out after breakfast. It should be clean, even if it were foodless... "That ain't no use," Mr. Carberry dodged past her. "The boys just throw things. If my box gets here, I've got a real nice sign in it. 'YOU KEEP MOTHER'S HOME CLEAN WHY NOT OURS?' it reads. We'll put that up."

"The deuce we will," said Anne. She went on sweeping...

...

"Morning!" Some man, roaring at you across your shoulder... Anne turned and saw the Colonel. His red, weather-beaten face, annoyed at something. The vizor of his barracks cap almost touched his nose. Hard-boiled, this bird... And yet, from under the shadow of the vizor, Anne caught amusement, flashing. Keen, blue eyes. Behind him a slender adjutant, or something, smiling. "What are you doing, sweeping this place yourself?" the Colonel bellowed.

"There's nobody else to do it." Anne laughed. "You can see, it needs it."

"Allen," shouted the Colonel, "have a coupla prisoners sent up here every morning!" The Colonel's face grew purple. The Adjutant was murmuring, 'Yes, sir. Yes, sir!' The Colonel's scowl, fading, as he turned toward Anne. "Don't you touch another broom," he said. "You've got plenty, haven't you, to do in that kitchen?"

"Not much to do," said Anne. "I haven't had any water there for three days."

"Allen," the Colonel bellowed, "get hold of Hayes. Ask him what the Hell,– I mean, find out why they haven't sent any water up here. See that it's here before ten o'clock today." 'Yes, sir,' the Adjutant was murmuring, 'yes, sir.' The Colonel stamped over to a soldier who was sitting, writing. Other soldiers had been there when the Colonel came in. It was as though they'd melted. Empty chairs stood, rocking... "What are these men doing here this time in the morning?"

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yelled the Colonel. "Look here, Simpson!" Mr. Simpson stole out from behind the counter. 'Yes, sir.'

"I won't have my men sitting in here in the morning. You people gotta remember there's a war on! If I hear of anybody buying anything at this canteen before eleven in the morning, I'll close the whole place!" 'Yes, sir,' Mr. Simpson was saying, 'yes, sir.'

"Wouldn't you like to see my kitchen, Colonel?" Anne asked sweetly. He followed, docile, "I got blue and white linoleum over at Nancy for my floor, if I can ever get anybody to put it down for me, and I'm making blue and white curtains for the windows,—"

"Allen," roared the Colonel, "have a detail up here tomorrow to put down linoleum."

"Now, sit down, Colonel, and I'll pour you out a cup of coffee," said Anne.

'Yes, sir!' the Adjutant was muttering, 'yes, sir!'

...

Next day. Things happening. A tub of water in Anne's tent. Two extra pails full. Pails of water standing all about the kitchen. The marmites both full. Three soldiers, under a corporal, tacking down the new linoleum. A young construction lieutenant coming up every half hour from the hangars to watch the work progressing. A load of dry wood, dumped behind the back door. Two lengths of duck board making a bridge across the muddy lake there. Anne made her blue and white calico into curtains and hung them, stiff and ruffly in the kitchen windows. Along the sill, she set the pink geraniums from the Nancy market. She tacked new, pale-blue oilcloth on the counter, and set a pot of yellow chrysanthemums on it. The window into the hut, she told Berthe, was always to be open.

In the hut, two American soldiers swept, and moved the chairs about. A third soldier stood watching them, carrying a rifle with fixed bayonet. One of the prisoners was a tall, slender man, with thin, clever hands, and searching brown eyes. Anne felt his gaze on her. But each time she looked at him, his eyes dropped. He went on, brooming. "Do you think we could scrape the caked mud off the floor with a piece of tin?" she asked.

"We can if you say so, Ma'am." He helped her cut the tin from inside a packing case. He knelt on the floor at her feet, scraping. When he thought she wasn't looking, he looked at her. But if she looked, he winced, and looked back at the mud on the floor. At ten Anne gave the carpenters each a cup of cocoa and a sandwich. She carried cups out to the prisoners and the guard. The tall prisoner kept his eyes glued to the floor as he took his. He opened his lips to thank her, but the words stuck. Anne watched him. While she watched, he couldn't drink the cocoa... Anguish, in his sensitive, pale face... By noon the place was clean. The prisoners had scraped it, swept it, mopped it till the boards shone yellow. "That's all?" the guard asked.

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"That's all, and thank,–" The tall prisoner hurrying toward the door,– almost running. 'Hey, there, not so fast!' the guard was shouting...

...

The soldiers looked at the clean floor and tried clumsily to wipe their feet on squares of burlap sacking. They looked through the broad open window into the kitchen. Say, it sure did look neat and nice in there, somehow... Floor, and things, shinin'... Cocoa tin, settin' on the stove and steamin'... Sandwiches piled up on trays on the table... The new Y. girl, fussin' round in a clean blue apron, with stiff white cuffs and collar... They sat down in chairs, arranged in neat rows, smoking. Funny the boys was all crabbin' this new Y. girl ... She sure did know how to p'lice things up, this girl did... A laugh came from the kitchen. Say, nice to hear an American woman laughin'... Clean and merry, her laugh,– not like them French girls... A soldier in a rocking chair leaned forward, grinning and tapped another. 'We got the best Y. girl in the A.E.F!' He nodded...

...

Anne whacked at tin cans with an army hatchet. Can opener too slow... She wished those Y.M.C.A. men would get out of the back kitchen. Five extra ones had arrived that morning to report, they said, to Mr. Smith. What? No Mr. Smith here? Strange, that Y. Headquarters,– well, this seemed like a real cosy little place. Could Anne make 'em lunch? Fine... The back kitchen was now sticky with their dishes. Whang. Late... Whang... Milk, spurting up, hitting the ceiling... Whang, whang. There, Berthe, dump it in the marmite! Hurry! Anne sliced the extra twenty loaves of bread. Berthe complained bitterly,– so many 'sondvitch' she said, were not 'pratiques.'

So many 'sondvitch,' Anne reminded Berthe, was war... Before she had washed the Y.M.C.A. men's dishes the aviators began to come to their tea...

...

More men than ever stood in line that evening. Last night some soldier had said the new Y.M.C.A. girl was no good. She didn't have no cocoa... Today some soldier had said she was a wonder. She'd had more'n enough cocoa to go round at noon time... Two helps, if you wanted... Tonight they'd come round to find out... In twenty minutes the double supply was quite gone. Men, who had stood in line an hour, turned and grumbled. The God, damned Y... Better git outa here, and stay out... They made for the door,– Say,– there was lamps now, on every table... Checker boards under 'em... Easy to set down and play a game of checkers... Better'n to go back to them lousy barracks ... Lose all your God damn money shootin' craps there... The ones that had ate their food and got through was playin' the pianner. They was singin'. Everyone was singin', like to raise the roof off:

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'Hail! Hail! The gang's all here,
What the Hell do we care,
What the Hell do we care?'

Sergeant MacLeod, in the kitchen, looked down at Anne, where she sat with her feet up against the stove. Tired... "Mind that toon?" he asked her.

'What the Hell do we care now?'

the men roared outside...

"No," said Anne, "I like it."

...

In the morning it rained. The kitchen was full of sticky cups, sloppy spots of curdling cocoa on the new, blue oilcloth. Muddy boot marks, covering up the gay white and blue of the linoleum. Anne's feet slipped on mud as she came in. The fire smoked. Getting breakfast for three was one thing... Getting breakfast for seven, quite another... 'A little dish of scrambled eggs and a cup of coffee will do me down to the ground.' J. B. Clark of Grand Rapids rubbed his hands, eyeing a bowl with six eggs that stood on the table. Anne covered the eggs up with an empty box. Those were for doughnuts. Berthe had managed to barter four pounds of commissary sugar for them... Had smuggled them out here, very secretly, under her cape... Horrid smell. The blooming oatmeal burning. Couldn't be helped... Had to be eaten... Coffee, jam, bread... 'Our Father, we thank Thee...' The gentlemen preferred toast, if Anne didn't mind. No, Ma'am, they didn't mind waiting... Real pleasant little place, this! Hadn't thought they'd enjoy their night lying on that wooden bench that ran round the hut there. But they'd slept pretty good, considering... Just as lief stay here...

"Morning, folks!" Mr. Carberry bounced in. "Real happy to have you with us..." Anne bending over, blowing the fire underneath the toast...

"The deuce we are!" she muttered...

...

The Y.M.C.A. men tipped their chairs back round the littered table, telling stories. Anne moved round, nervous. Would they never get out? Would she never get started washing their sticky dishes? "Oh, Mr. Simpson, when you get time," Anne said, "we need another case of cocoa, if you could show me where to find it in the storeroom."

"There isn't any more cocoa in the storeroom," said Mr. Simpson. "You've been using it up quicker than usual,—"

"Good God!" said Anne. Mr. Simpson walked out of the kitchen with a bent head. Why did the Young Men's Christian Association send these profane young women out here? A woman who knew how to cook,— who could get breakfast without burning the oatmeal was what you needed in a canteen... These girls they sent,— but the new

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girl was calling him,– "Mr. Simpson, do you suppose you could go up to Headquarters and ask the Major for a truck?" Anne called. "We could go down and get the supplies ourselves." Mr. Simpson paused. The Major,– a cross old bear... Mr. Simpson disliked him intensely. The Colonel,– God protect Mr. Simpson from the Colonel! A profane man... His oaths came out like shots out of a pistol... Made you jump... You didn't like to get jumpy... "Please!" the new girl said. Mr. Simpson looked into her earnest grey eyes. The girl was really trying to do her best here... Untrained, uneducated, that was the trouble... Her mother, perhaps, had died when she was a child... Had never taught her nothing... One might get a ride to Neufchâteau,– and one real good meal at the Y. mess down there... Might run in to Headquarters, tell 'em you'd like a new job...

"Well, all right, I'll go ask the Major," said Mr. Simpson...

...

Anne washed the sticky breakfast dishes. Water, lukewarm. Plenty of water... Dreadful to have plenty of water now, and have no cocoa... Her reputation depended entirely on cocoa,– Anne could see that. Sweet, chocolate stuff to fill the yawning gaps that army rations left in people's stomachs... 'Yes, it's a real pleasant place to live, and it don't cost you nothing' Mr. Carberry's voice came from the back kitchen. 'Eat your breakfast here, and mess with the squadrons.' Anne dumped cups into the dish pan. Clatter, clatter... Damn this Y.! She watched films of curdling cocoa split and float in pieces over the greasy water.

"Can't get a truck, Miss Wentworth," Mr. Simpson's kindly face was spattered with rain and pink from walking. "I talked to the lieutenant up there. He said it was impossible for me to see the Major. Impossible to get a truck, too. The Colonel came in and commenced roaring at somebody, so I left." Anne smiled.

"But just the same," she said, "we've got to have that cocoa."

...

A clean collar,– better look nice... Surely she must have one in her suit case... Men liked girls to look nice,– Heavens, the mice were making a nest in that suit case... Anne put on the clean collar, a fresh shirt, her best blue tie. Making a nest out of the pieces of your best sweater... No matter... She powdered her nose, and pulled her hat down to a sporting angle. Pulled on her French-blue rubber coat, turned up its collar, strode out of her tent into the French rain. Soldiers shouted 'Hello' as she walked up the road. A small, camouflaged hut, smoke coming from its stovepipe... Above the door a sign. HEADQUARTERS FIRST AIR DEPOT,– that must be it... She knocked. "Come in!" bellowed the Adjutant. He jumped up when he saw her come in, even though he had his telephone to his ear. The little barrack smelled of hot, iron stove, swirled with tobacco smoke. Brown paper was tacked everywhere on the walls. 'A Nieuport, fallen

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on the road to Maxey,' the Adjutant was saying. 'Yes, sir. Send right out after it, sir. You want an ambulance? Yes, sir. Right.' He clapped the thing down on its leather box. "Miss Wentworth," he said, suave, coming round the table with his hand out. "What can I do for you? The Major? Wait a second..."

"Come in, come in!" The Major came to the door himself, led Anne through, shut it behind her. He was all cordiality, all smiles. "Sit down. Put your feet up to the stove, they're wet. Oughtn't to get 'em wet! You know, these French colds,– A truck? Sure." The Major picked up his telephone. Across it he smiled, winked one eye at Anne. 'Transportation,' he said, harshly, into the receiver. "Terrible weather,"– pleasantly, to Anne. 'Transportation? Major MacDonald speaking. You let me have a truck to go to Nerfchateau this morning? Have it up at the Y.M.C.A. in fifteen minutes.' The big man grasped Anne's hand, rose to escort her to the doorway. "Not at all, not at all," he was saying, "any time there's anything, just let me know. Got enough blankets down there, these cold nights? Send you down an extra pair tonight. It'll be colder."

"Thank you," said Anne, "thank you..."

...

The six Y. men were sitting, rocking, watching the two prisoners sweep the hut out. The tall prisoner glanced at Anne, sideways, flushing. Been waiting to hear her voice...

"Oh, Mr. Simpson," Anne said. "I've got a truck here for you to go to Neufchâteau. Let's get lots of cocoa and try to get a stove, too. And Mr. Clark," the new Y. men were sitting, smoking. Pleasant place... Didn't know but they'd stay... "There's no reason why you and your friends shouldn't ride back," the Y.M.C.A. girl was saying...

"Better stick round," chirped Mr. Carberry. "Never find a handier place than this to stay in."

"And Mr. Clark," Anne went on, "remind Mr. Simpson to have a look for Mr. Carberry's books down at Headquarters. He's awfully anxious to begin his work here."

...

Leonard Diggs pushed his chair back. Broke... This poker game had gone on four hours too long. Seven officers sat round a table in the small, back room of 'Louise's.' Aviators who came to Avency ate their meals here. Hard to tell whether Louise's was officers' mess, or club, or bar-room. Diggs got up and stood, back to the hearth. Only faintly warm,– the fire was out. Across the poker players' heads, the window. Outside it, rain, falling into mud... White hens, stepping among the brown pools... From a small shed across the yard, a woman backed out. The folds of a full skirt over broad hips. Wooden shoes. She straightened up,– something struggling in her hand,– a rabbit. The woman had dark hair, slicked back,– a few wisps combed down across her forehead. Louise... She bent over, stroking the rabbit,

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which lay, quiet against her thigh, held in one hand. Then she picked up a knife and sawed at its throat. The rabbit, winking... Red drops, falling to the mud... Leonard Diggs turned, walked out. Blood... Your blood... Anybody's blood would drip into the mud like that... Ought not to eat animals that have to die violent deaths... Violent deaths enough nowadays, without forcing them on poor, defenseless rabbits...

He went through the blue corridor, buckling his belt. He stood on the stone step before the house door. No place to go... Row of low houses opposite, just like the row of low houses on this side. Little puffs of steam that rose from the manure piles outside the windows. Brown streams of liquid that oozed from under the piles into the gutter, across the gutter, mingled with the mud that filled the roadway. A soldier trudged past, saluting the lieutenant in the doorway. Afterwards he spat into the gutter. Be glad when this God damn war was over, and you didn't have to s'lute no more lieutenants... These God damn pilots, standin' round so pretty in their fur collars... Nothin' to do but sit in at Louise's, playin' poker... Took the planes up on good days,— but there weren't no good days... Not in this God damn country...

Leonard Diggs returned the soldier's salute sadly. God, how much better it would be to be a soldier! Have someone take care of you,— keep you from borrowing your next month's pay and losing it all at poker before you got it... Shoot craps all you liked and still get a free bed in the barracks... Not owe money for your billet, and your mess bill,— go two thousand francs in a hole with nothing to show for it. Just stay on the God damn ground and fix the engines. Roll 'em out, and watch some other damn fool go up to see if they'd fly... Better to be a soldier, and keep your damn neck...

Dreary town... Dreary mud... Dreary to have it raining... But when it didn't rain, you had to go up. All very well if you patrolled the lines, flew into glorious combat with the Fokkers, but this job of test pilot,— going up eight or ten times a day, and if you didn't get killed on a plane, hand it over to some feller from up above to fight in. And having the feller from up above always thinking you were a God damn, lazy coward... 'Sunny France!' a soldier in the road said cheerily to someone who was passing.

'Avency the Dry!' Christ! That was a woman's voice,— a woman, talking American. 'Terrible weather, isn't it?' the voice was saying. Why, it reminded you of home, the way she said it. Leonard Diggs wanted to talk to her. Wanted it more than he'd wanted anything for two months. He was a good sight lonelier than that soldier... He watched Anne, as she came, in her blue rubber coat, her dripping hat with its red triangle, stout shoes, caked with mud. He must talk to her... Must... He would salute,— and then perhaps she'd,— but she was looking at an old peasant woman across there in a doorway...

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'Bonsoir, Mademoiselle!' the peasant woman's deep voice. 'Bonsoir, Madame!' the girl said. She hadn't seen him. And yet, God, he must,— He'd been a fool, and when you'd been a fool, you wanted,— He stepped down into the mud and followed the girl. She turned off to the right, went down the narrow, curving street that led out past the Airdrome. She swung on, out of the town, up the hill. Christ, how the woman could walk... Up the hill, faster, faster, Anne walked. Behind her, through the rain, Leonard Diggs plodded...

...

He stopped a moment in the doorway of the canteen. So this was the Y.M.C.A... The other boys would kid him... He had always disapproved of 'uplift,'— women, messing round in military camps. Thought men ought to go off, fight wars by themselves... Never could be by themselves, though, that was the trouble... There were always women... He went in. A clean, neat place. Blue and white curtains, flowers... The girl was putting on a sort of dress thing, made of blue gingham, tying it behind her with deft fingers... Queer the way women could tie things even behind them,— All a man could do to tie his necktie... God, to get back to neckties... The girl setting a kettle over an open stove hole. 'Have your tea ready in just a sec,' she called to someone...

...

"Could I have tea?" Anne looked up. A strange aviator, standing in the doorway, his coat dripping... Black circles under his eyes...

"Sure," she said, "come in." His hand trembled as he hung his coat up. Flying did that... 'Hello, Diggs,' said the Supply Officers as he sat down, 'say, I hear you crashed Friday in that D.H.4.'

"Yeah, those things are no good." Diggs sat down. "British discarded 'em because they were no good so then we bought 'em." The girl was asking him if he'd have milk or lemon. Wonderful to hear a woman talking... "Lemon, thank you..."

...

He sat there, after the others had all gone. "How much do I owe you for this feast?" he asked Anne.

"I'm afraid it's fifty centimes. You've had everything you want?" Anne was sipping her own tea, eating a cracker. Diggs threw a fifty centime note down on the table. "Last cent I've got in the world," he said.

"But you're a pilot," Anne looked at his wings,— "they get more pay,—"

"Yes, and gamble it all away playing poker!" The man sat, staring at the table. "God, you don't know what it's like, bumming round that town day after day and doing nothing! No place to sit, nothing to read, nothing to think about except this damned war. They won't let us fly to Paris, like the French do. So you sit in the mess, and everybody's playing,—"

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"And you play." Anne watched the twitching face. Better let this young man run on a little...

"I used to win. Used to send the money home,– they came to expect it. Now, my God, I've not only got none to send, but I owe everybody. I owe for my billet,– landlady needs it, too. Her husband got killed over by Verdun. Can't pay my mess bill." He looked up. Girl's grey eyes not so disapproving as he'd expected... Perhaps she'd seen War...

"You fly a little now and then, I suppose?" she asked.

"When it clears up," he said. "That isn't often! We try the damn planes, to see if they'll fly enough for the birds up front to fight with. If a plane won't fly,–" He kissed his fingers' tips, tossed them into the air. "If it will, why we take another and try that. Eight or nine times a day, we go up. You never know, really, till you're up two hundred feet, what's going to happen. And you never really believe you're going to get there. You get jumpy."

"But once in a while you fight?"

"Never. The others do that,– not the test pilots. We're just the dogs they try the planes on. Not one of us that wouldn't *rather* fight, though. But this damn,–" He sat there silent, staring at the table.

"Do you enjoy poker?"

"Not any more. I'm through. Not going to play any more..."

"Mistake to play anything after you've stopped enjoying it," Anne said. "Let's think of some way that you can save that money. How much do you owe the landlady?"

"Two hundred."

"I'll lend you two hundred. The Y. pays high, and it doesn't cost us anything to live here. And listen, why not ask Mr. Simpson if you can live in one of the extra storerooms? Make him think he's reforming you. He's a kind, good man, and he came over here to reform people." Diggs laughed.

"Perhaps he *could* reform me!"

...

"A case of cake chocolate, too! Isn't that splendid?" Anne helped Mr. Simpson drag things round the storeroom when he got back. "We'll hide that under this shelf here," said Mr. Simpson, "where nobody'll see it." "But aren't we going to sell it?" Anne asked. "No, they'll only get into an awful mob round the counter," said Mr. Simpson. "Then only a quarter of 'em'll get any, and the rest will curse the Y. Better not to let 'em know we have it."

"Well say," said Mr. Carberry, "I'm glad you're back. I didn't come over here to sell cigarettes."

"No, neither did I," said Mr. Simpson, sadly...

...

Black night. Anne groped her way out into the darkness to find her tent. Rain, pouring down, trickling inside one's collar. Tunes, run-

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ning in your head... A busy evening, seemed as if more and more came each night. Sergeant MacLeod, unfolding a blue-print on the kitchen table, studying out his work for next day, as if he'd always belonged right in that kitchen. MacLeod bossed a hundred men every day, putting up hangars, Hopkins had told Anne. 'Mac's on'y nineteen, but he can lick any soldier on the airdrome. Been earning his living since he was fifteen, Mac has! Why should she think about him out here in the darkness? She didn't need protection... She could find her own way... A rope caught her feet, and she fell forward, hands in slimy mud. The tent. Groping, groping, she felt her way round to the door flap. Dark, damp, dripping. Rain, pattering on canvas... Wet canvas overhead... Damp boards below you... She lit a candle, set it under the bed, draped blankets round it. Pattering, pattering rain drops... In the dim, red glow she undressed, shivering. Better put on a sweater... She stooped, opened her suit case. Field mice jumped out, scampered into the darkness.

Pattering rain. You never got so close to rain in peace-time... Hurrying, constant, insistent,– even after you got tired of it, it went right on... In the end, it would drip through... Anne pulled the cot over,– it was dripping through now, wetting the pillow. She got in. Damp... Blankets scratching... Alone, in the middle of a mud field. Not afraid... Silly to be afraid. Anne blew the light out. Dark... Big guns booming, booming...

...

"There's a Lieutenant Diggs," Mr. Simpson said next morning. "One of the test pilots. Has to be on the field at seven and finds it rather a long walk out from the village. I believe I'll let him have that empty storeroom." If he could save this young man from playing poker,– Why, he had come over here to save young men from Sin, – but naturally he couldn't speak of that to this young woman...

"I don't see any reason why he shouldn't," Anne said.

...

"Got any cigarettes?" A soldier leaned against the counter. Mr. Carberry, who had got hot water from the kitchen, was skipping back with it toward his room to shave. 'No time now, no time now,' he shouted. The soldier waited, standing. Mr. Simpson appeared behind the counter from a doorway. "Got any cigarettes?" asked the soldier.

"Come back at eleven-thirty," said Mr. Simpson. "Can't sell anything here now." The soldier turned on his heel, strode toward the doorway. 'God damn this Y.M.C.A.!' Would say it out loud, only there was a girl here... Outside the door, he told it to an aviation mechanic. "A guy what's goin' to the front walks three miles over here to get a God damn cigarette," his voice was loud and raucous, "and that God damn son of a bitch, he says: 'Eleven-thirty, my boy, if you'll come back here at eleven-thirty.' Say, what the Hell does he think we do in this man's army?"

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"*Watch* out!" The aviation mechanic jerked his head toward where a girl stood, in the doorway.

"What outfit?" Anne asked.

"166th Infantry, Ma'am." The doughboy was embarrassed, growing redder...

"Go round to the kitchen door," the girl said. "You show him, Jenkins."

He followed the mechanic to the kitchen door, stood there, embarrassed. The door opened and the girl came. She was pulling packages of cigarettes out of a carton. "Here, put these in your pockets," Anne said. "And here's some chocolate, can you get that in? And cookies. Don't eat them till you get out of sight... No, they don't cost anything. The Colonel would scalp me if he heard I'd sold 'em before eleven." She held her hand out. The soldier took it, blushing. Aw Hell, what was it you used to say to women? 'Fraid to open your head fear some o' this God damn army lingo'd slip out... He grew red, redder...

"Next time, tell us who you are," the girl said.

...

The tall prisoner stood near the kitchen door, broom in hand, eyes following Anne as she came toward him. "Listen!" he said. She looked up at him. First time his eyes had met hers... Dark eyes, agonized eyes, eyes full of a sort of terror... Anne had hauled a boy into a boat once, on the river at Downham. His eyes had had this same look... "If they tell you why I got in the jug, don't you believe 'em," the man said to her quickly. "I never done it. They framed me. A feller ain't got a chance to defend himself at these court-martials. Say, honest to God, you don't believe it, do you?" Anne had asked MacLeod what this man was in for. 'He won't get out till the war's over,' was all he'd told her. Whatever it was, the man had suffered for it... Whatever it was, his eyes were pleading, pleading...

"No," she said. "I don't believe it."

"Thanks." His chin was trembling like a small boy's. He turned and went on sweeping. She didn't believe it... She didn't believe it... One person in this whole, God damn camp who didn't believe it... Who had faith in him... Was even holding her hand out to him... He grasped it, shook it, would have liked to kiss it,— He dropped it suddenly. The guard was watching. 'Say, there!'

...

Anne bent over the table, next Berthe. Forty pounds of bread to cut in slices, to spread with sticky jam out of a tin can... Two barrels of water to make hot, with wet wood... Twenty cans of condensed milk to whack open... Mustn't forget to keep wood in the oven, drying ... Boxes to crack up. Leaning pieces against the wall and stamping on them. A noisy, clattery kitchen. A queer smell,— cocoa burning... "Say," MacLeod came in as she was lifting the heavy marmite, "some-

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times I don't think you ever seen a kitchen before." He took the thing and set it on the table.

"I never cooked much," Anne said. MacLeod smiled down at her. Didn't care if she was stupid,– he *liked* to do things for her... No place, for a girl, this... Rough work, and all them bums, a settin' there an' lookin' at her... A girl, that 'never cooked much'...

"Well, say, Miss Wentworth," he said kindly, "where was you raised?"

...

One, two, three, four... Anne counted hummocks in the mud field, as she walked over them going back from supper. Queer how quick you got used to eating alone with thirty young men... Felt now as if you'd done it always... Thirteen, fourteen. Somebody had said war spoiled conversation... That was true... Particular things were all you saw,– the world wiped out. Thirty-four. Turn to the right now, walk down the furrow. Furrow running with water. Muddy, muddy... Where was the blooming hut? Couldn't see an inch ahead in this rain. Probably counted wrong... Probably never find it. A man loomed up ahead, huge in the darkness.

"I was afraid you was lost." Sergeant MacLeod put out a big hand and touched her gently. Hell, how he'd like to put his arm around her... "I've been huntin' for you," he said. Anne put her hand through his arm. Couldn't get lost now... Just stumble along through the darkness, trust him... He'd find his way anywhere... Carry you, if need be... Wonderful comfort in the iron muscle of the great arm. He was opening the kitchen door, holding it for her. Hopkins turned from the stove, where he was stirring cocoa. He took Anne's coat. He had a letter for her. "'Nother one from G. L. Suydam," he said. "Writes reg'lar, don't he?"

"Too regular," said Anne...

...

Before the counter, the line stretched away into the smoky darkness. Strange faces in the line tonight. "Doughboys," said MacLeod, "they're campin', now, in the towns all round here." The doughboys wanted two sandwiches apiece. "Let's let them have 'em," Anne said. "If you do, our own fellers'll get sore." MacLeod was solemn. "And if I don't, the doughboys'll get sore." Anne laughed. "They'll curse the Y. either way. Let's let 'em have two!"

One by one, the doughboys came on, silent. First honest-to-God woman they'd seen in three months... Hoped she'd talk to 'em... But when she did, you was afraid to answer... Scared some o' that God damned talk,– No place for a woman, out here... Yet this girl didn't seem to know it... Looked as happy as if she'd been raised here...

Anne watched them as she pushed out sandwiches and made change. Not full of talk, like aviation mechanics,– this bunch... They came, silent, awkward. Face after face, husky, bronzed, tough. Then,

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suddenly she saw a face not like the others. The man was tall. He looked down at her over the tipped hat of a short, red Irishman in the line. Eyes, soft and full of humor. Understanding you, understanding the World, Life... A civilized face... Hair that curled just a little from his forehead... Lips that were gentle, curving outward, almost smiling... Dark eyes that looked straight at her, met hers... That made her feel, somehow, as if she'd known him always. Yet she hadn't... This was new... New... And he was coming nearer... His hands on the shoulders of the red Irishman. Smooth, clean hands... They thumped the khaki shoulders, gently, and the man bent over, talking. 'Shorty,' he was saying, 'it's my treat tonight,' or something like that... His voice,– a university voice... A voice moulded, somehow, by generations... A civilized voice... A man who'd lived with books... And understood them... How did he happen,–

The Irishman was standing in front of Anne now, looking at her. God, but this here girl was absent-minded... 'Aw, say, Slim,' he flung across his shoulder, out of one side of his mouth, ''tain't neither. You won that game o' craps...' The tall man's eyes met Anne's. The eyes laughed...

"Thanks!" He took his mug of cocoa in one hand, a sandwich in the other. He watched Shorty, proudly slamming down his two francs. Then he looked up again at Anne. A smile... A row of clean, white teeth, that shone in lamplight... Gentle lips,– Yet a fine hardness about the clear-cut jawbone... An ease about him. A man not like the others... She watched him as he strode, graceful, after Shorty, holding his cocoa high so not to spill it. At Shorty's curt directions, he laughed, gently. Eyes full of affection for the tough, red man... 'Say, Slim, over here!' 'Over here, you two!' Anne heard the doughboys calling...

"Cocoa, please Ma'am!" the soldier in the line before her.

"Oh, yes..."

...

The rush was over. The cocoa and the sandwiches were finished. A hundred men, still in line, turned away, sulky. 'God *damn* this Y.M....' MacLeod wiped the counter, pulled his chair up to the stove, put his feet up. There were Hopkins and a Jew truck driver, waiting to talk. The night before they'd sat all evening, discussing Evolution. Anne had started it by showing them a small, fossil polyp she had found on the mud field. That, she said, trying to remember Geology 4, must have been left here when all this land was sea ooze. This led to Evolution. The idea bothered MacLeod. He believed in the first chapter of the Bible. Yet this idea had a wonderful reasonableness about it,– those fingers in the wing bone of a chicken, splints in a horse's leg, the flippers of a seal,– all with the same bones as your own hand. It did look likely. He wanted to believe it. And yet... "What bothers me," he said slowly, "is if the first chapters of the Bible

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ain't true, then how can you tell whether the rest of it is true? And if it ain't any of it true..." Miss Wentworth wasn't listening like she did last night... She was just leanin' there agin the table, her arms folded, gazin' toward that fool plant that got so terrible in the way there on the counter...

"What?" Anne said. Wanted to hear that pleasant, civilized voice again... Wanted to talk to someone to whom the things one took for granted were the same things... Could she go out, and find him? In the end, she'd have to... Have to see him... Have to talk to him... Why, he was,—

...

"Can I come in?"

She had known all along that he was coming. Two people could not be marooned thus, in a desert, and not talk to one another... "Do," she said.

He leaned against the table next her, a gentle humor in his brown eyes. It seemed to him a joke that they should meet here, out among the soldiers, in the dark mud... Might have met somewhere at a dinner, he in a boiled shirt, she in some sort of gown of trailing green and gold stuff... Or on a golf links, both in loose tweeds... Or on an Adirondack trail, she in something yellow-brown to match her soft hair. Brown, or green,— that would be the color for those grey eyes... Eyes that looked right through you... Extraordinarily pleasant to lean here, against this kitchen table, and look down into clear pools of mountain water...

"You like this job?" His eyes smiled down. Yet, there was a seriousness somewhere behind them... He knew that Life was,—

"Yes, very much," said Anne. His clean-cut, smooth hand curved delightfully about his pipe's bowl... What he said didn't matter. Nothing mattered... This was something more than common talking...

'What was that you wuz sayin', Mac?' said Hopkins, over in the corner. MacLeod spat in the wood box. What was this blame doughboy doin', comin' and settin' here as if he owned the whole place? Talkin' to their girl... Takin' her all up, so she didn't have an eye for no one...

"I like your chrysanthemums," the man said. "And your curtains,—" Mustn't tell her that he liked her grey eyes... And that he liked the spirit that looked through them... That he'd been waiting all his life for,—

"Thank you," she said. "I believe you're the first person who's seen them, except my little French boy,—" The man's clean, white teeth against his pipe's stem... The fine, smooth fingers curving about the black bowl, taking the pipe down...

"That's just it," he waved it, gently. His eyes,— he had ideas, this man... "The French,—"

"Hey there, snap out of it!" The short, red Irishman stood, ple-

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thoric, in the kitchen doorway. "Say, Slim, if we're goin' ter get back before First-Call we gotta hike!"

"I suppose we have." The tall soldier slipped down from the table, knocked his pipe against the wood box. "Shorty, here, takes care of me," he said. He laid his hand down on the red one's shoulder.

"I'll tell the world I do!" said Shorty. "If it wasn't fer me this guy'd forget to put his boots on. He got a bit of gas in his chest up there to Soissons. Since then, I nursed him," confidentially, through one side of his mouth, to Anne. "Even if he ain't got sense," he said, "the guy's a damn good soldier!" The other ran his long fingers through Shorty's stiff hair, tipping Shorty's cap off. "Aw, say you! Cut it out!" Shorty clapped his cap on at an angle. "Good night, Ma'am," he said. The tall soldier stood beside him looking down at Anne. His eyes, across a long, long space... Understanding... Everything...

"Good night..."

"Good night..."

...

She sat down by the stove among the others. Life, just beginning... Everything, somehow, suddenly, before you,– A door opening, into a sunny garden,–

"Mac, here, he says that if you can't believe the first of the Bible," said Hopkins, "you can't believe nothing. I say, cert'nly, that's the idea. A lot o' them scientists don't believe in no God, do they, Miss Wentworth?" Hopkins looked at her. Miss Wentworth sittin', gazing through that little front draught, at the fire. Her eyes, way off... And Mac, there, he wasn't listening, neither... Hopkins got up, and strolled out... Somethin' sure had happened to spoil this evening...

"What did you say? I didn't hear that," Anne said.

...

Morning. A clear day,– you could hear the airplanes singing up there. Anne sliced bread. She'd never see him again... Foolish to think about him. Twenty cans,– The man had come, just as everyone in war came, and had gone off... Forty loaves to slice... Knife dull. MacLeod would sharpen it,– he could do everything to make your body comfortable... Ten more loaves. That tall soldier, though, would do everything to make your mind,– Surely, surely you must see him again... There had been a Long Space, and he had looked across it... Not too much jam on each piece, jam would not last. Nothing would last. In war, nothing ever,– He was civilized, educated, was of the world... His voice and his long, clean hands were gentle... His hair grew like Geoffrey's off his forehead... He was, somehow, like Geoffrey,– untarnished by War... Unembarrassed, graceful, as he leaned here against the kitchen table... Might have been leaning on the balustrade of someone's garden... They would have been in evening clothes, in the old life... He in a dress suit,– she in an evening dress, – green velvet perhaps, and gold,– she'd get one like that when she

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went back to Paris... Sticky milk, oozing slowly into a can of red-brown cocoa. How did this man happen to be a soldier? Ought to have been a captain... 'A damn good soldier,'– Shorty had said, proudly. Shorty, tough, hard-boiled... Shorty, loving the tall man,–

"Oh, la! la!" Berthe struggled with the can opener. "Difficile, ça!" Anne seized the axe. "Look out of the way, Berthe!" Whack, whack. Terrible racket to be making in a kitchen. Officers, coming in for their mid-morning coffee. If he had been an aviator, she might have seen him... But in the infantry, going to the front, she never,–

"Let me see, Lieutenant Fitzpatrick, two lumps?"

...

Sozzling your mess kit in a pail of greasy water. Bits of soldiers' beans. And pieces of gristle that they'd spit out. Ough, you couldn't stand it... Not much longer... But you'd have to... This thing wasn't going to stop because it made you feel sick. It might last ten years. Anne clamped down the cover of her mess kit, clasped it under her arm, set off up the hill toward the canteen. The fork and knife clanked. How long, after all, could you stand it? Could you go on and on like this, forever? Till you were thirty? God, no,– thirty too old... Antique,– thirty... Nobody was thirty... There had been wars that lasted a hundred years, though,– Where was it leading? What was the world doing while you were sozzling mess kits? You forgot what you were here for... Did the world forget too? Surely, they couldn't... They weren't buried under things like mess kits. Didn't feel their legs grow weary from jerking them out of deep mud. Didn't feel how tired, sick, you got of all this. A nausea that possessed you... 'Cafard,'– the French had named it. They had stood it four years... Anne stopped,–

He was standing there in the path before her, his cap in his hand, his eyes serious,– but smiling just a little. Queer feeling in her stomach... Queer feeling all over... Almost afraid of him, as she came up. No, not afraid of him,– afraid of Life... Afraid of,– of,– He was saying 'Hello.' Quite calmly, as if he'd known her always. He turned, and walked beside her. She had a feeling that her shoes were ugly...

"You wouldn't consider going for a walk I suppose? It would be awfully good to talk to someone,–" He said it quietly, as if he'd not much hope she would go with him.

"Yes." How could he even doubt that she'd go? She shouldn't, of course,– her job,– Damn her job... "Yes, I'd like to," she said...

...

They started along a railroad track, beyond the mud field. The track ran through the oak woods to the westward. In the autumn sun tall trees glowed, wine red. Anne walked fast to keep pace with the easy swing of the man's legs. He walked with his face a little lifted,

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feeling the west wind. A grace about him,– even the uncouth uniform could not destroy that...

"It's funny that we should meet like this," he said.

"Yes." So he, too, felt it... They would have met somehow, some time...

"How does it happen you're not an officer?" she asked.

He laughed. "I suppose I ought to have been," he said. "Gone to Plattsburg,– all that. But somehow when it came to commanding other people to go out and get killed, it seemed simpler to just enlist and be commanded. The under-officer jobs don't take any great intelligence, you know,– I knew there'd be plenty of nice young men to be lieutenants. I was lazy, I guess. I thought I'd just go in the ranks and let the other fellers do the thinking. You know, soldiering is a glorious release from thinking. You never have to decide anything,–" he laughed,– "you just listen for a bugle, and if it says 'overcoats' you put the blooming thing on. You get physically fit and, well,– sort of down to hard pan. There's a certain satisfaction in it." Anne strode along, beside him. The smell of damp oak... The west wind, blowing ... And a man, at last, whom militarism didn't appeal to...

"But don't you miss things?" she said. "Books, and,–"

"And chairs, and decent places to eat, and baths,– Oh, frightfully at first. But you get used to it. You can stick it."

"There's one thing I can't understand though," said Anne. "How you can come right down to,– to killing people." She looked up at him. His face as gentle as her father's... Josiah, who had never hurt a living creature... A quiet, thoughtful face. The thin brows scowled a little.

"I used to wonder about it myself," he said. "Wonder how I could ever make myself go through with it. Bayonet drill kept me awake at night at first. For a while I thought I couldn't stick it. But you have to. You can do almost anything you have to." He strode on, silent, looking straight along the track before him. "The night before we went over the top the first time, I was in terror,– not so much of what they might do to me as of what I'd have to do to them. I pitied the Germans that night. I loved them. I saw, suddenly, that we were in the same box."

"And the next day?"

"We got out, into the mud and wires. The man next me,– a little Wop, he was, that I'd grown awfully fond of,– went down. Crumpled up and hung there like a rag in the barbed wire. Then something got me. It's sort of physical rage, that possesses you and drives you. You lunge ahead, and it's disgusting, and just for a minute the disgustingness of it thrills you. Bah!" He shook his head. "It's filthy business,– that 'seeing red' that takes hold of you. All the things that the race has been trying to acquire for the past few centuries drop off, and the things that our ancestors did in all the æons of bar-

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barism crop up." They walked on, silent. The railroad track turned, and they left it, walking westward through the oak woods. "Civilization isn't very deep, is it?" the man said. "It's terribly easy to drop back, give over everything the race has won so slowly, through the ages, and slide back to the Stone Age."

"The trouble with me is," said Anne, "I like it. In peace you don't know what the object of life is, so you never really know whether your job's getting you there or not. But in war, the object's simple: to win. The jobs you do are direct: nurse men when they're hurt, and feed 'em when they're hungry. You see their satisfaction right off. It's fun, that!"

"Of course!" He laughed. "There's something primitive and elemental in it. I could see that last night, as I watched you. A woman, feeding warriors,– the old, old thing! Yet, to the warriors, you know, you stand for much more than just that cocoa. Your kitchen, a sudden little island of civilization in a dark sea. That window, with its pink lamp and its chrysanthemums, and its blue oilcloth,– a sort of oasis in the desert. A shrine, where men step up to worship for a minute, one by one. They'd come, even if there weren't any cocoa."

"Oh, no they wouldn't!" Anne laughed. "They'd say 'Damn the Y.M.C.A.' and walk out." He threw his head back, laughing.

"You must have an awful life here!" He watched her face, half serious, half amused...

"No. I love it. Hard, physical labor, that gets you so tired you can hardly stand up when night comes,– it's a great feeling."

"You know," he looked down at her. "I think it's always more fun to do the bottom jobs in this world," he said, eager. "Long ago, at school, I was on the football team. I loved it. You could lunge ahead with all your strength and struggle, and not give a damn about anything except whether you did your stunt right. Then the last year they made me Captain. And suddenly the pure joy of playing the game had vanished. You had to worry about the other fellers. It's the same all through life. After college, I was a reporter on a New York paper,– used to rush round interviewing people,– getting a tremendous kick out of the world, and writing about it. Then they promoted me. I found myself anchored to a desk, correcting the spelling in other people's stories, and the kick was all gone. I got out."

"And then?"

"Oh, I spent a year studying history in Cambridge, England. After that I got a job teaching at my old school. I liked that,– living in a dormitory with a lot of nice, funny, twelve-year-old boys, trying to civilize 'em,– to make 'em look behind the facts of history toward the real Truth. Then the Head Master got an idea he wanted me to learn to take over his job when he got through. I found myself sitting in an office talking to parents, settling squabbles, standing smugly and swallowing a lot of religion that I didn't believe in. What I really liked

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was kids and history, and I was getting farther and farther from both."

"And then?"

"Well, then the war came. It wasn't an easy thing to decide what one should do. My ancestors were Quakers. I'd been brought up to disbelieve in fighting. I hoped for a long time that Wilson could keep us out of this thing. Then I saw he couldn't. Everyone began telling me that I was a teacher and I ought to stay out. My relations thought I oughtn't go off and leave my mother. You see, she and I had sort of fought our way along together ever since my sophomore year in college. My father was a surgeon,– rather an eminent one in New York. He died when I was eighteen. We had plenty of money before that, practically none after. So I stoked furnaces, waited on table,– all that,– and Mother opened up a shop in New York. She did over an old stable into an Italian sort of place with a nice courtyard. We used to ride bicycles round Europe in the summer, picking up good, old things, and sending them back,– pewter, and old furniture,– nice, plain things. It was one of the first places in New York where you could get really good things, and it was quite successful. We lived in a studio apartment above it, and people used to come there,– scientist friends of Father's, art people, writers, critics,– Mother has a great way of collecting people."

"And what did she think?" said Anne. "Did she want you to come?"

"We hardly dared discuss it. She didn't want to push me. She hated jingoes just as much as I did. But we both believed tremendously in Wilson. When I'd made up my mind the things he was going in for were the right things, I just went and enlisted. Then I told her. And she was glad. I found she'd been a little bit afraid I wouldn't."

They walked out into a broad field, filled with sunlight. A bank, like an old railroad embankment, crossed the field. Along its top, among the bushes, sheep were walking. After them a shepherd with a black dog. The soldier scrambled ahead through the bushes up the steep bank. "All right?" he asked Anne, across his shoulder.

"All right," she answered. ~~Nice of him not to try to pull her... Most~~ men would want to... He took for granted you could climb the thing ~~as well as he could. A narrow path edged with bushes~~ wandered along the straight top of the embankment. To the north, beyond the highway, the road to Toul lay on it, a straight, white ribbon, shimmering up the valley. Sheep dodged past them. 'Bonjour, Monsieur et 'dame!' The ancient shepherd edged back in the bushes.

"Mon ami, qu'est-ce-que c'est que ce remblai?" The soldier's French was perfect. "Is it an abandoned railroad, perhaps?"

"Ah, non!" The old man shook his shaggy, grey beard. "The railroad has never passed by here. He passes by Avency, le chemin de fer."

"Qu'est-ce donc, alors?"

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"C'est la route Romaine, Monsieur. No one passes here, except the beasts." The old man bowed. "Bonsoir, M'sieur 'dame!"

"Roman road! I thought so," said the soldier. "Whenever you see a straight, broad road in France, going from one horizon to another, it's the Romans. Europe was one big place then, and not a lot of small ones. The Roman Empire must have been more like the U.S."

"It's queer, I've often thought that," Anne said. "They built for long distances, didn't they, the Romans? A huge civilization, spread thin, like ours. The French are like the Greeks. We're like Rome. Comfort and luxury, and all our things bigger than anyone else's things."

"And think what they must have thought,– those colonizing Romans, living in their great, civilized villas along their good roads, with cities and baths and theatres,– when the barbarians from the north came down and knocked it all to pieces. Two hundred years of peace they'd had,– longer than France has ever seen since,–"

"Sometimes I think our civilization's going to crack the same way."

"I believe we have got to the end of an age," he said. "The period that the barbarians started when they knocked out Rome is just cracking up now. 'The Christian Epoch,' I suppose they'll call it. If this war doesn't finish off our civilization, the next one's going to,–"

"But there isn't going to be a next one," said Anne. "The whole object of this one is to fix it so that there won't be another." They turned from the straight embankment, and wandered along a winding road that led toward the hills. How did he know she'd always wanted to climb those hills...

"I believed that when I first came," the man said. They turned off into a path that led past a small, solid church of grey stone. Below them lay the huddled housetops of a French town. Above, a vineyard sloped up to an oak wood. They crossed the vineyard slowly. "I believed it, that's why I joined the army. It seemed to me that Wilson was putting this war on a higher plane than most wars. It looked as if we *were* going to make the world safe." They sat down on the ground at the edge of the oak wood, looking across the French town to the valley, across the valley to the distant airdrome. "See!" The man pointed to the sky, where a tiny speck tossed and looped and twisted, gleaming yellow in the afternoon sun. "The only poetry there is left in war, that!"

"A Spad," said Anne. "One of the pilots from the Twelfth, out playing." She watched the man draw out his pipe and fill it. Hands that didn't go with the uniform's rough sleeves... Long, clean, deft fingers, that seemed to love the pipe's bowl... She watched the match flame suck down. "And don't you still," she asked, "believe that it's a war to end war?" She leaned against a rock and took her hat off. You could be comfortable with this man...

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"I'm afraid I don't." He lay back, hands clasped behind his head, watching the tiny speck that was a man up in the blue sky. "I think we've been wrong about what would come of this war. I think something will come, but not what we think. You know, I've been talking to the soldiers,– they're a pretty fair cross-section of the U.S. They aren't fighting for Justice, or for World Peace. They're fighting because they've got an idea that Germany would lick us if the Allies got licked. I believe Americans are in it just the way Europeans are in it, from good old jingo nationalism. They got scared at last, and when they got scared, they wanted to fight. So when Wilson came out with a new idea that was about a thousand years ahead of their ability to comprehend it, they shouted, 'Hear, hear,' and ran along to war. When it's over, Wilson will find they didn't believe a word of his idealism, any more than the Allies believed it. I doubt if he can pull off a League of Nations."

"If I thought he couldn't," said Anne, "I'd go home. It's the only thing that gets me through this sometimes,– the idea that it can't ever happen again." She sat gazing at the valley. Gold light, slanting on tawny stubble... Oak trees, wine-colored... The singing of an airplane... From the town below the sound of voices and of sheep bells...

"My brother," she said, "was killed." He sat up, suddenly, and clasped his arms around his tall knees. Sat quiet, beside her, gazing downward at the great plain. Silence... Silence...

"I know," he said at last. "I know."

He picked a piece of grass. His fingers gently separated its fine seeds. She felt his eyes on her as she looked past him at the valley below. He knew... He understood... He didn't say anything. There wasn't anything to be said...

"I'm afraid it's only a few people who feel that way about the war, though," he said, at last. "It's a vision that only the intelligent have eyes for. Perhaps Wilson can pull it off,– law between nations and some sort of International body to enforce it." He filled his pipe again. "The trouble is," he said, "Wilson is trying to make nationalist states turn round and act in a way that's absolutely foreign to their nature. I doubt if he can. But there's something else that might come,–" Anne watched him hold the match, puff at it. His teeth, clean, white against the pipe's stem... A man that,– "Seems to me there are two ideas in the world right now," he said, between puffs,– "There's the Wilson thing: to make the old nations coöperate in some supergovernment. That will take a higher sort of statesmanship than we've produced yet. Then there's the thing in Russia. Nobody really knows, of course, what's happening in Russia. But I believe that there's the germ of something new there. Communism will probably fail at first. The democracy that the French Revolution established failed, at first. Dictators and absolute monarchs rose up and stamped it out, and stood on it for fifty years. But the idea lived. Half a century later

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the bourgeoisie made political democracy work. It was political rights that mattered then. Now it's economic rights. This Russian thing is going to be some sort of economic democracy in the end."

"But will it work?"

"Not right away. There'll be a swing back, after the war, to everything we did before. There'll be business depression and profiteers, – they follow all wars. There'll be threats of revolution and dictators putting things back to normal with a firm hand. There'll probably be a big boom of prosperity. They'll manufacture more luxuries, fewer necessities. The rich will get very rich. Then, either we'll have another war, and the economic system will crash, or somehow it'll topple over of its own weight. It always happens when a few people get too much power, and the majority too little. Then we may have some entirely new system, as different from the present capitalist system as ours is from the feudal system or the slavery system of Rome. Systems don't last,–"

"No," said Anne. "Yet the Capitalists think the present thing is going on forever."

"Sure. The Romans thought that. The feudal barons thought that. Our capitalists think that the world revolves around the principle that no one will do his best work unless he can make enormous gains and hand them to his children. That's bunk, of course. My father was a surgeon, he probably did as much to advance the surgery of his time as any other one man, yet money simply didn't matter to him. Look at teachers, writers. They do a good job for the job's sake, not for the money. Look at you, acting as a waitress in a hash house, and me, a buck private in the rear rank. It's not inconceivable that people will work for other motives than personal gain, provided the system were changed. People toss their lives away for a thing like war,– they might get worked up enough to toss them away for something that would get the world ahead a little."

"But if we had a new economic system, would that stop war?"

"Well, you see there's always the Marxian idea of the 'Workers of the World' mixed up in it. The laboring people always lose by War. As soon as they all see that, there won't be any more wars. The people at the top will have to arrange some other method of settling differences. As it is now, everything is settled round a table at the end. We fight first, and discuss it after. Some day we'll discuss it first, and not bother with the fighting." Anne stood up, brushed her skirt off, pulled her hat, with its red triangle, onto her head. Would like to stay... Like to drift off somewhere, and listen, listen, listen to the man's voice...

"I'm afraid it's time to go back," she said...

...

They walked down a steep path, through a mucky yard, into the narrow, manure-laden street of the French town. American soldiers

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were tramping up and down, swearing, clanking their mess kits. Grinning at the Y. girl as she walked past... Before a door a French girl stood talking to a soldier. 'Promenade?' the man was saying, 'Ce soir? Compris?' He turned a sudden scarlet when he saw Anne. The eyes of the tall man, walking beside Anne, met hers. They both smiled. He shook his head a little. Then suddenly he was serious.

"Their morals aren't much worse in war, though," he said. "Men who get by in peace, get by in war, too." He looked ahead. Anne watched his face, rather pale, with shadows under his brows... One of the ones who 'got by'...

"Yes," she said...

...

A broad door stood ajar at the last house. A fire blazed on a hearth under a huge hood. Before it, the broad hips of a portly peasant woman, bending over. Anne and the soldier stopped before the doorway. Firelight, yellow-pink, reflected from the tile floor and lighting soft, quavering flames in copper kettles... Touching the face of a child who played on the great, curtained bed in the corner... The peasant woman's shadow filling the whole place as she stood up... The soldier looked down suddenly at Anne: "Shall we ask her to cook our supper for us?"

"I ought to go back,—" she said, slowly. His eyes on hers... Eyes that smiled... Eyes that understood things... "Yes," she said, "let's."

...

Anne watched him from the doorway. He stood before the old woman, cap in hand, his head bent forward, smiling down into the broad face. His French was rapid, fluent. The fine wrinkles in the woman's brown face deepened. Oui, Monsieur, she had a pretty little rabbit in the marmite. Was it that Monsieur would be satisfied with pommes frites et une salade? She had some very beautiful heads of lettuce from the garden. That would be bien assez, the tall young man assured her. He was going now to search some cigarettes among the soldiers, would she have the goodness to make Mademoiselle comfortable? To make her at home? He turned toward Anne.

"It's all right," he said. His eyes laughed as he passed her...

...

Anne sat on a low stool, watching potatoes sizzle on the open fire. He came in from the street and sat down on the hearth, back to the wall, hands clasping his knees. Somewhere he had washed and brushed his hair smooth... He watched her, silent. She sat, watching the old woman turning the potatoes. Feeling his face there in the shadow... Feeling his dark eyes... A moment, trembling... Someone would have to speak. It couldn't last, this moment,—

"They do things beautifully, these French," he said.

"Don't they! These lovely, polished tiles, the fire, and the copper

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kettles and the big bed,– everything they need to live with, nothing extra."

"It's what I sometimes try to make the men see," said the soldier. "I try to tell 'em how fine and stalwart these old women are who work in the fields all day and cook so good a dinner, and live so beautifully on such a little. Americans can't see it. They like their women frail and good for nothing." He leaned his head back against the wall behind him, his eyes on her face. Hadn't thought the face was beautiful by daylight... Hadn't seen that light in the grey eyes... The reason you liked so to talk to a,– Dangerous... Mustn't let yourself,–

"Yes. The war has given us a chance to know the peasants," said Anne. The man sitting in the shadow wasn't listening... Looking at her, thinking,– something... Something... She gazed into the fire. Felt his eyes... Liked to feel them... Wanted,– And now they left her. She didn't really want his eyes to leave her...

"Viens!" he beckoned to the little girl on the great bed. The child climbed down, and stood, shy, clinging to the curtain. Then she came forward, holding out a huge pewter spoon for him to look at. The tall soldier rose and stood before her, bending over. "Comme c'est joli! C'est magnifique!" Seriously he examined the great spoon. The child smiled suddenly, held her hand up. "Ah, oui!" He took the child's hand and led her, slowly, toward the fire. She sat down next him on the hearth, snuggling close to his tall knee.

The old woman drew the smooth, low, wooden table before the fire. She lit her one, stout candle. Candles were very scarce, very dear, she told them. Everything was scarce... In time of peace, one did not have much, Mademoiselle, but one had enough, one lived well... 'Mais, en temps de guerre, vous savez,–' She shook her old head. Mademoiselle would sit here, with her? And Monsieur opposite, with la Petite? Comme ça! Voilà! She cut bread, drawing the knife toward her ample bosom. The crust crackling, bits dropping on the tile floor ... The soldier was tying a great linen napkin round the child's neck. The child chattering to him, in French. The woman uncovered the black pot. An aroma... A flavor... A feeling under your tongue... Suddenly the man's eyes met Anne's.

"France!"

...

The old woman took the candle to a cupboard, and padded back, bearing a dusty bottle. Very good wine, she explained, from the caves of Châlons,– one would drink to the health of France and of America. They rose. The three glasses clinked against each other above the wavering candle. "Vive la France!" said the soldier. The faces, in the yellow candle light were solemn. Again they raised their glasses. "A l'Amérique!" said the old woman, "et à l'armée Américaine, qui est venue pour sauver la France!"

There was a little silence as they sat down. The peasant woman

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watched them. How they were serious, these young Americans! And how this young man's eyes regarded the girl's face... Strange that this young man, who looked so scholarly, and who spoke with the accent of the great world, should be a simple soldier... But he was smiling, telling her how délicieux her wine was...

...

They sat there, after supper, saying nothing. Gazing into the glowing coals before them. "You'll smoke a cigarette?" he said at last. He held a package toward her. Anne shook her head. "My uniform,– the Christians." He smiled: "No Christians here now." She took it, watched the smoke swirl under the great hood. Good to sit here, somehow, saying nothing... To feel him, next you, looking at the red coals...

...

The stars shone in a clean, dark sky. They shivered in the north wind as they strode along the roadway. Silence... The rhythm of their feet on the dim gravel...

"I get a great kick out of the stars," he said.

"Or is it the north wind?"

He laughed. "That's a war kick,– physical. You get that when a shell falls and doesn't hit you."

"Or when you get a meal after you've been starving,–"

"Or a bath after you've,– That wasn't the kick I meant."

"You meant the Universe," said Anne.

"Yes. Each star a sun. Each sun, with its own worlds, all whirling round a center. Our universe,– other universes, growing in the nebulæ off there. How they got there, what they all mean,– that. I suppose the beasts can sniff the north wind. But I doubt if it flaps the curtain back and shows them the Great Miracle the way it does us."

"Do you think there's a God somewhere that made it?"

"How can we tell? There's certainly a kind of Order out there. Scientists are discovering more of it each year. It doesn't matter much what you call it,– physical law like the scientists, or 'Beauty,' like my mother, or 'The Good' like Plato. Seems to me what's important is, that we can see it. That's where we've got above the animals that sniff the north wind. If it's a God's Idea out there, why then we're part gods, because we partly get it. I say," he looked down at her, "you're not really a Christian, are you?"

"Believe in a Father and a Son and all that?" Anne laughed. "No. Of course not. The notion of a Man-God rather interferes with the workings of the Universe, doesn't it?"

"It takes all the beauty out of it," he said. "They pick out one of the most thrilling of all the laws things work by, the Generation of Life, and say that for once, on this particular planet, it failed to work. They spoil its perfection. But it's not so much that that I mind, it's the admitting that the God part in us isn't working. The Generation of

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Life,– all life from some other life, it's a wonderful thing,– that. If we accept the old Pagan-Christian folk lore about the Man-God, we're merely admitting that we're too small to understand the 'God of Things as they Are.'"

"But God is a prestidigitator," Anne said, "the soldiers have been telling me about him,–"

He laughed. "That's just it. Worse than that, though. An audience that imagines a prestidigitator, and then believes him. And disbelieves the universe because they've set him up contrary to it. That's a fault of the human race, isn't it? They want to put their own, petty miracles that they can comprehend in place of the Great Existing ones, that they can't. My father taught me this: to revere the Great Existing Miracles, and let the man-made ones alone."

"Your father was a scientist."

"Yes,– but it's a point of view. Of having confidence in power of the God part of you to discover Truth, and daring to believe it. When we make gods in our own image, we go backwards. Barbarian tribes did it, better than we do. But when we realize our minds are somehow in tune with the Universe, that we can observe and reason, and discard what isn't true, and admit there are a lot of things we don't know,– then we're progressing."

"Yes, admitting you don't know is the really great thing," Anne said.

"It puts an enormous responsibility on the few who can see through," the man said. "If we're part god, we've got to keep the god part of us alive, or it will atrophy and drop off. Got to keep ourselves sensitive enough to see the Truth as sparks of it fly our way. Got to be able to learn from the scientists and the philosophers and the artists, who do see."

"Yes," Anne walked on, swiftly. The night wind, and the man's mind, like a cool, green forest... Pleasant paths, with breezes blowing through them... And he was here, beside you... On... On... If you could go on, forever,–

"So when I get a kick out of,– the north wind, it's a good thing,– a superb, thrilling, physical thing. But when I get a kick out of the stars that spell the Plan that's out there, it's a higher thing. See what I mean?"

"And Heaven?" said Anne. The sharp cool of the night... The smell of wet grass... The wind... The rhythm of your muscles moving ... A man, who walked beside you... Heaven was, —

"That's the Great Riddle. There's immortality of course,– the immortality of Phidias, and Socrates, and Jesus. And of Napoleon, and Judas. But for most of us,–" he walked a minute,– "I rather think like Hamlet that 'the rest is silence.'" Anne walked beside him. The quivering night mist, rising from a hollow... Muscles that moved in rhythm one with another... Heaven, of course, was here, while

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bodies lasted... Silence... Feet, crunching the gravel. Life, just beginning...

"Yes," she said, "That's what I think..."

...

They crossed a field onto the railroad. "It's queer, I've always had a dream about a railroad," the man said. "It stretches ahead of me, out of a wood, across fields, two rails, shining silver. At the far end, they go into another wood, and then they disappear around a corner. Way off, where the tracks come together, there's a tower. There's something in that tower,– I don't know quite what. I always walk toward it,– never get there." They strode on, the man taking two ties to each step, Anne one. Silence... The smell of damp bark in the oak wood... Rustling leaves that, for a moment, shut the stars out... The damp, sweet dark about them... They walked slower. Out, through the arch of trees, into the great field... The camp, invisible, spread in the field below them... Its noises rising to them, out of nothing... Overhead, the stars... Earth dim, mysterious, but the stars,– It was as if the Universe were trembling... They stood, a moment, silent.

"This reminds me of my dream," the man said...

...

They ploughed across the mud field. Anne's fingers touched the rough wood of the canteen. She felt her way along it to the kitchen. Same boards... But Life had moved, leapt forward... Her fingers trembled. She stopped before the closed door. Something was going to happen... Something,– Was it the silence of the Universe that made you tremble? She turned. His white face looking down at hers through darkness... Eyes, under deep brows... A moment... Eternity ... The Universe, there, watching... His arms, coming up gently, slowly... Her breath rushing in, her whole body tense, stiff... Life, filling you... White hands clenching into tight fists, pulling the arms down... She saw his shoulders slump suddenly against the bright stars, his hands relax by his thighs. Felt his eyes leave her,– His profile white, straight, against the dark night,–

"There'll be a thousand of them waiting for you in there," he said.

His voice... Saying something... Trying to make this moment easy for her... Keep her from floating in the Universe... And yet, he,– The door behind Anne opened. Yellow light flooded out, touching her uniform, touching the dark mud. He stepped back, into shadow.

"Good night," he said.

"Good night."

She held her hand out. Something terrible was going to happen when he touched it... She, who had never wanted anyone to touch her ... Something,– But her hand was still there... He hadn't touched it ... Footsteps outside in the mud, the darkness... He was gone... Gone...

...

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"Kinder late tonight. Hopkins and I, we wuz just a goin' to start puttin' the stuff out." Sergeant MacLeod that was, talking behind her... Sergeant MacLeod leading her in, and taking off her jacket as if she'd been a baby... "Say," he said, "you're shiverin' all over. You'd oughter wear a thicker coat these nights. Get Fitzpatrick to give you one of them fur coats that comes back when the aviators gets killed."

"No, I'm not cold," Anne said...

...

Men's faces in the cocoa line, coming toward her. Men's faces, getting smaller in the distance... Men, taking mugs of cocoa, and putting francs down. She called a man back: 'I gave you the wrong change.' Third time she'd done it. Only last night that she had looked up at the line and seen,— Ten years ago, that... She'd known him always... Always... That straight, fine profile... Eyes, under deep brows... There in the darkness... The feeling of them on her... Her breath coming, going... His clenched hands moving downward... Two cups... 'I'm paying for two cups. You gave me too much. Yes, Ma'am.' Something was going on around her... She was working... Working... Fighting a war... Must pull yourself back... Hand out sandwiches. Play checkers. Smile, laugh at them... On with this war...

...

Evening over, at last, thank goodness. The hut empty, barnlike, full of dirt and papers. The prisoners hadn't swept today because she hadn't been there. Mugs, sticky with cocoa. Disordered chairs. She could go out, now, through the cold dark, to her bed. Let herself think. Think... A garden, waiting out there, for you to walk in... A strange lightness... As if you were floating,— Two soldiers stumbled across the hut, between the chairs, tired, dirty. Anne held the lamp above her head, and peered out at them. Rogers, it was, one of the mechanics, and Kuntz, who drove the truck up when she first came. They stood, blinking in the kitchen doorway: "Can we have somethin' to eat? We been out salvagin' a plane, and,—" Kuntz stopped. They looked at one another, came in, sat down. "E-er... Gosh..."

"Goldfish,— that's all I've got," Anne said. She set the lamp down, began to build a fire, pried away at a can of salmon with the opener. You couldn't control life... Couldn't think... War had you... The soldiers sat there, leaning against the table, staring. Anne cut bread, opened jam, made cocoa. Get food inside 'em...

...

"O-oh! That was good!" they grunted. They pushed their chairs back, lit their cigarettes at the lamp chimney. Anne sat, her elbows on the table, chin on her clasped hands. Pleasant, to feed men when they were hungry... But there was something the matter, still, with these two... They looked at one another. Rogers shook his head. He heaved a long sigh. "Whose plane was it?" Anne asked.

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"Hoffman's." He shook his head again. "Gee!" Then, after a puff or two, slowly, "Christ!"

"Say they can laugh at these here aviators," Kuntz said. "Folks are off a' them because they live high. There's nothin' in it. I'll admit that while they're home, they're settin' pretty, but they do their share of dirty work in this war, I'll say!"

"What happened to him? Tell me." She looked from one face to the other. Hoffman... You could see him, bending his head as he came through the doorway... Feel him sitting next you, talking,– that easy vivacity, that rhythm that there was about him... Could feel the others stopping in their talk to listen...

"He got burned up." The soldier sat back, gazing at the empty dishes. There, he'd said it... Told her... He hadn't meant to tell her... No need to keep this girl awake, too...

"Out by Barly Duck, it was," said Kuntz. "We hunted for the plane a long time,– Those Gawd damned Frawgs a-tryin' to tell us where to go, and the lootenant not understandin' a damn word. Well, at last we found it, layin' in a field. The whole damned thing burned up, and underneath it Hoffman, settin'..."

"He had his face down in his two hands like this," said the other, "sat there, all burned to a crisp. Boy, I don't never want to do a job like that again!" His hand trembled as he put his cigarette out. "A French priest came along, and asked the lewy to put Hoffman in the French church. So we carried him to the French church, and laid him on a table. Pretty soon lots of French women came, and lots o' kids, with flowers. They piled the flowers on top of Hoffman, until at last you couldn't see him no more."

"You know, Miss Wentworth," Rogers broke in, "I can't figure why they don't give our aviators parachutes. Look at that Boche photographer that came down on'y the other day over by Nancy. His plane was afire, but he jumped, and sailed down just as pretty."

"They used to say at the Headquarters in Paris that the aviators didn't want them," Anne said.

"Don't want 'em!" said Rogers. "That's good! Ever hear the pilots talk about 'em, Miss Wentworth? Say, I wish those guys in Paris could see one of these fellers once he's cooked up like a beefsteak! Wished they'd had to carry,–" He stopped. The light flickered. The lamp was getting empty.

"It's twelve o'clock," said Anne.

...

Fresh air. Out, under the stars again... The Universe, that didn't see and didn't care... This world, the planet of a single star, there... Her tent, here, on the mud field. Dark, empty, with small, brown mice that scuttled. Hoffman, alive, and sensitive, and full of grace and rhythm... Hoffman, sitting with his head down in his two hands ... 'Cooked like a beefsteak...' A God up there among those stars,

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that planned this? No God would let men act as they did act... Let old men sit in pink plush armchairs, and send young men to,– Order, out there, among the nebulæ... Galaxies... Suns,– each sun with its planets... Tiny things, these planets. With creatures on them. Killing themselves in wars. Man, who could understand the Order... But could not keep his own, small house in order... The tent was dark. Cold dampness... Mice, scuttling in the darkness... Anne struck a match. 'Put that light out!' A guard's voice, somewhere. She blew the match out. 'Gosh...'

...

Hard straw, that prickled. Floor creaking. Hip bones, that stuck in. How long before one would be comfortable in bed? Men's voices, – machine gunners outside there watching the clear sky. Hoffman, lying in a church, with flowers piled up so you could not see... Artillery, booming, booming. A tall soldier, who stood beside you in the darkness... Pushing clenched hands slowly to his side... And you,– one breath would raise you off the earth, and into,– The soldier saying something pleasant, you couldn't hear what... He was not the kind of person who,– Decenter than you were,– You would have,– Long ago, that... Sleep... Through the darkness, artillery, always booming... Booming...

...

He was here, walking beside her... But this time they were Romans ... She had on a toga, that kept slipping from her shoulder... Blowing backward, from her legs, showing her bare knee... He strode along in something dark that floated... His face was clean, clear-cut, like a Greek statue. His hair curled from his forehead like a marble god's hair. They had come to conquer these barbarians, he said, in all these little countries. To make them all one... Make Europe all one, so there couldn't be any more War... America and Rome knew that countries had to be big places. 'But everybody wants war,' Anne heard herself say. 'They like it. It's more fun than sitting in an office.' They were walking up a hill, toward the oak woods... They skimmed along, their faces in the wind, their feet not touching. Below them, in the valley, was the flying field. They turned to look back at it, but it was gone. 'Let's not go back,' Anne heard him say, 'let's go on. I believe we can find a bigger field over the hill, there.' He took her hand. They floated. Over the hilltop, among the trees, together...

Between the trees a road, or perhaps a railroad... Two narrow, shining lines that seemed to meet, away off... One could not tell whether they met or not, because the track turned. If they met, it must be just beyond the corner. Above the woods, a tower, with a peaked roof... A long way off, the tower...

Great, crashing noises in the woods on each side. She felt quite safe, though, with her hand in his hand... The tower,– It was the tower of

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the Downham Court House... Funny, she had not known it... She'd done this before... A greater crash. He looked down at her... His lips,–

"You'd better get up. They're bombing us again, Miss Wentworth,–"

...

Anne raised herself on her elbow. Cold air,– That voice... Mustn't forget whose voice... Mustn't let that slip away from you,– Who,– Straw mattress, under your elbow, crunching. Underneath it, a floor creaking, creaking. Boots, shuffling on the platform outside the tent door. That was MacLeod's voice. "I'll wait here till you're ready," he was saying, "take you down to the trench,–" Another crash. A sound of ripping wood. Anne put her feet down on the damp boards. Earth, cold, hard, tingling, bringing you back to life through your feet. She was awake now. She knew the flying field was being bombed by Germans.

"Thanks," she called, "I'll be there in a second."

...

Have to wear what you could find in darkness. Stockings,– damn the stockings. Surely she had put them on the chair, there. Gone. More in the suit case... Where was the blooming suit case? Ouch! She stubbed her toe against it. Mice, jumping out of it, and scampering. Mouse beds, all neatly made of bits of stocking. More comfortable than beds made out of straw were... A sweater, hastily, over one's night gown. Bloomers, uniform skirt. Trench coat. Rubbers. Everything sticking. Eyes getting used to looking in the darkness. 'Be sure and wear your tin hat,' said the Sergeant. Anne groped on the top shelf. She lifted the heavy steel thing. Mice jumped from under, scattering, tumbling over one another. Nice warm house under the watertight tin hat... House all broken to pieces by a giant... Another crash. Everybody'd be all broken to pieces in a short time... The tin hat was heavy, and it teetered. She came out, balancing it on her head and laughing.

"This here strap goes this way," MacLeod fixed the strap behind Anne's hair with clumsy fingers. Girl's hair... Soft, smooth hair... Night,– God...

"Thanks," the girl said...

...

"There's no hurry at all," he said, quiet. "Nothin' to be scared of. Let's take our time." A sudden pac-pac-pac,– cutting the night, behind them. Across the black sky, above their heads a stream of golden fire, spurting. "Tracer bullets," said MacLeod, "from the machine gun yonder." Other dark figures were walking in the mud field. MacLeod stopped and jumped down somewhere, splash. He put his big hands up, took Anne's hands, jumped her down. So Josiah had used to jump her long ago, off the top of the stone wall at Downham. 'Jesus Christ!'

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Stalwart figures in tin hats, against the bright stars. Splash, splash. They jumped down, into the soft ooze. 'Jesus,–'

"Hey! Police the talk!" MacLeod said sharply. Anne laughed. "My feet are soaked," she said to the man next her, "aren't yours?" 'I'll tell the world they are...' Crowded. 'Move up there, toward the end!' MacLeod, tall, quiet, shoved over next Anne. Damn trench ought to be ten feet longer, then there'd be room... Anne felt his knee next hers. Felt the knee tremble suddenly, shake, knock against hers ... She looked up. The boyish face, over the huge shoulder, was calm, untroubled. He smiled down at her, and yet, his knee shook... Queer...

"Boy! Next time I come down here I'm going to bring my feather bed... Probably be here an hour, like we wuz last time." Hopkins' high voice. Everyone laughed.

"Say, it's a great war!"

...

Morning. Good Mr. Simpson was excited. He was leaving. The Y. had just telephoned that he was to travel to Neufchâteau on the bread truck. His bedding roll, on the kitchen floor, all ready. Hoped he'd get something next time a little bit more in line with the work he'd come over here to do... So pleased at going that he forgot to thank God for his breakfast... Anne walked out to the truck to see him get on. She carried things, reached up and handed them to him, shook his dry hand. "We'll miss you," she said. Kuntz, at the truck's wheel, winking at her... 'Good-bye, friends, good-bye,' Anne waved,– Well, that was the end of Mr. Simpson...

...

Carberry stood behind the counter, complaining loudly. Hadn't come here to sell cigarettes, he hadn't. The Educational Director, he wuz. Didn't see what Y. Headquarters was thinkin' of, lettin' Simpson go before the new man got here. Well, anyway, till the new man came, he was boss here. "Say," he called to the guard, "take those prisoners in and clean my room up, will yer? No need o' them fellers fussin' with this hut..."

"They'll have to sweep the hut after they get through," Anne said...

...

Eleven-thirty, and the hut still dirty. Anne edged behind the main counter, and walked down the corridor past the small, boxlike, empty storerooms where the Y. men lived. Carberry's door was open. She glanced through, quickly, as she passed it. On Carberry's cot the two prisoners sat, smoking... The guard sat in an armchair, with his feet up. 'What the Hell are you fellers,–' Fitzpatrick's voice came through the open window. Anne stopped in the corner of the corridor. Fitzpatrick, passing, coming for his coffee, must have looked in... Fitzpatrick's profanity was flabbergasting... Anne stood, with her mouth open. The guard's rifle clattered from Carberry's trunk to

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the board floor. 'The God damned lazy sons of ...' Anne turned. Perhaps if she ran past...

But she ran into Carberry, coming, the other way, and puffing. "Oh, it's you, is it? It's you, callin' these orficers, and turnin' them against these poor, unfortunate boys here? Say, I know what I think of ..." Anne pushed past him. The prisoners and the guard were pushing past too. The tall prisoner almost touching her... His breath making funny noises, his lips near her ear:

"Say, I'll put that boob in the hospital if you say so," he hissed. '*I've* got nothin' to lose.'

"Oh, no," said Anne. "It's all right."

...

Diggs came into the kitchen. Panting... Walking up and down... His face all muddy. His right hand going from his side to the button of his blouse, twisting it, back to his side again. Back to the button... "Well! I crashed a plane this morning. Wheel came off the damn thing when I landed. She turned a somersault. Look!" He pointed through the kitchen window. Across the mud field, across the roofs of barracks, Anne saw the plane lying on the great field, a crumpled heap of jackstraws.

"Here, have some coffee!" she said. His hand shook as he took it...

"You know, I wonder who's going to pay for all this? Here we go flying planes that cost five or six thousand dollars. Crashing them, blithely as if they all cost nothing. I wonder, in the end, who does pay?" He set the cup down. His fingers, twisting the button, trembling. Down to his side... Up... Down... Up...

"Here, I've got some hot water for you," Anne said, "go wash the mud off your face."

...

Evening. The rush over. Anne was tired. Carberry complaining was worse than Carberry smiling, doing nothing... Thank God, anyway, it was raining,– there wouldn't be any air raid... Bed, and time to think, and,– "Could I have something to eat?" Lieutenant Upham of the Transportation Department stood in the doorway... "Just got back from taking spare parts up front." "Sure. Come in." Breaking wood for the fire, heating cocoa, opening salmon... Young man, sitting there, his head bent forward, his feet stuck out before him...

"It's a Hell of a life," he said suddenly. Anne looked round at him. He needed food inside him... Men's morale depended on their stomachs,– lucky women's didn't... What was he doing? Cutting the pilot's wings off his blouse? Why? She watched him, struggling with his pen-knife. He walked over and threw his insignia in the stove. He unpinned the ribbon of the Croix de Guerre that he wore, and threw that in, too.

"What's the idea?"

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"I'm a damned coward, that's why!" The man turned his back on her, stood, looking at the ceiling. "I've funked before now, when I was in the Ambulance. I funked again today. Saw a motor-cycle driver hit by a shell on the road. Went on and left him, writhing, in the gutter. Told the men I was afraid the spare parts would get hit if we stopped. It wasn't that. It was because I was scared of seeing a wounded man. I was scared all the time when I was out there driving ambulances. Seasick every time I looked at wounded. I only went on because I was more scared of what someone might do to me if I quit. The French won't fool with cowards!"

"Here," said Anne, "eat something." She touched his shoulder. The man gulped cocoa.

"When I got in our army, I learned to fly. Won my wings. Do you know why I'm trucking now? Because I'm yellow. I saw a fellow burn up. I couldn't stand it. I pulled strings so I could stay on the ground." He walked toward the door. He pressed the back of his hand against his eyes. "As we went by that man today he opened his mouth and,– Christ!" He opened the door, went out into the blackness...

...

Morning. A headache, a furious sore throat, a cough. Eyelids that hurt... She lay there shivering between the blankets. Couldn't get up... Got to get up... You couldn't lie here in a tent, out on a mud field... Move into one of those empty storerooms today, before the new man came... Cold wind, flapping through the canvas... Anne got up, shivering and coughing. Mustn't be sick...

...

There was a small, empty storeroom between Carberry's room and Diggs' room. Anne and the two prisoners moved her things in, while Berthe swept it. Anne coughed. The prisoners coughed. The guard coughed. Berthe coughed. 'In winter,' Berthe shifted her broom to gesture, 'all the world coughs.'

...

Anne cut bread with a French knife. Five loaves, ten loaves, twenty loaves, thirty-five, on and on. Head aching... What did one do out here if one were sick? Noon time. Anne could not go to mess. Could not face beans, slopped over junks of meat... She made herself tea. MacLeod came, bearing something on his shoulders. A long frame with legs to it, strung with some sort of rope... He set it down in the hut outside the kitchen. "Made you a bed," he said, "outa them shock absorbers from the airplanes." He pushed the strange ropes. Why, they were elastic... He carried it through the passage to Anne's room, picked up her mattress, laid it on the new bed, bending over, tucking in the blankets. Anne sat down on it. Soft... It bounced. She lay down, curled her legs up. "Oh," she breathed, "oh..."

MacLeod went out, whistling. If you could make Her comfortable,

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She might stay... "Thank you, Sergeant," She was calling, "Thank you..."

...

Almost all the afternoon she lay there. The thing was soft, and springy. It didn't hurt your hip bones. Under four blankets, you could get almost warm here... Rain on the wooden roof... Not so bad as rain on canvas... But it dripped through here, too. Sleepy... Mustn't get sick...

...

Another evening finished. Anne looked out to the empty, darkened hut. Her head ached. Thank God she wouldn't have to walk out into the mud field tonight... A man's cough. Who could be out there, coughing? She held a candle high above her head, stepped into the dark hut. The Colonel had had a stove put in the hut that morning. Its door was open. The red coals lighted a man's face. He sat huddled in a chair, his feet up. "It's after taps," Anne said.

The man shivered. "I,– I kinder thought I'd stay here. So damp out in those barracks. I can't seem to get warm." The eyes that looked up were feverish... Anne went and got the blankets that the Major'd sent her. "Thank you, Ma'am." The man gazed at her under heavy lids. She turned and made her way back through the empty chairs toward the kitchen. She'd make hot lemonade... Leonard Diggs was pacing up and down the kitchen. His hands, clasped behind him, his hair rumpled.

"It isn't that you want to play poker," he said, still walking, "but that you've got to keep yourself from thinking. Just sitting there and watching the others play, won't do it. God!" He ran a nervous hand back through his rough hair.

"I'll make you some tea," Anne said. Get something inside him, quickly...

"I can't fly like I used to," the man went on walking, walking. "I've panned twice lately. You laugh at it, and they kid you. But inside you can't feel so blithe about this getting mangled. Wouldn't care a damn if I got straight killed,–"

"Nonsense," said Anne. "Of course you'd care. This thing's going to be over some time, and we'll go home."

"My God!" The man dropped to a chair. The man's face, desperate...

"I can't go home. My wife,–" He stopped. His eyes stared at the lamp's flame. Anne sat down. Wanted to go to bed... To be alone... Be quiet... How many nights, now,–

"Tell me about it," she said...

...

"Too bad!" Anne poured more tea. The man's wife a silly little fool, who'd gone and run off... "So you think it was her mother's fault,–"

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"And mine. Her mother didn't want us to get married till I got back. We insisted. We went to live with her mother while I was training. She worked on Isabel,– talked at her,– everything I did was wrong, I couldn't suit her. Men oughtn't have anything to do with women." He lit a cigarette. His fingers trembled. "They're so much stronger, so much more persistent than the men are. They keep their minds entirely on the small things. And when you live with folks, it's the small things that count."

"You couldn't take your wife away?" said Anne.

"How could I leave her all by herself when I came over? She's only nineteen." He got up, threw his cigarette in the stove, and sat down, staring at the oilcloth. "And so, the other fellow stepped in. I gathered that from her mother. I haven't heard a word from her for three months. I stopped sending money when I got broke, and she,–" He got up, paced up and down the kitchen. "I might as well go and raise Hell like the others," he said. "It doesn't matter."

"Of course it matters. Your own family. They'd care,–"

"They're all dead or married. Married folks don't care for anyone except themselves and their own children."

"But you care. You've got a standard. That's all that really matters. It's easy enough, isn't it, to do the right thing in Peace, with everyone standing round and watching what you're doing? You've done better! You've stopped poker over here, where no one did care. I thought that was fine,–" Diggs looked at her. He smiled. Why, she really thought so... He'd never seen Miss Wentworth's cheeks so pink, her eyes so bright and starry... Nice of her to sit up and make tea for him... Tea made you feel good... She coughed as she carried a glass of hot lemonade out to some soldier. "Do you feel sick?" he asked her when she came back.

"Rather," said Anne. "Good night..."

...

Morning. No use, she couldn't get up. Her head felt dizzy. She fell back onto the softness of the shock absorbers. The Medical Officer came round at nine o'clock to see her. Lieutenant Diggs, he said, had stopped and told him. Why, she must have a stove here,– get pneumonia in all this dampness... The Medical Corps Corporal would come up and see she got fed,– no, it wouldn't be a bother,– the Corporal would enjoy it... "Why, you haven't any idea," he sat down on Anne's trunk,– "what fun it is to take care of a woman..."

...

Berthe came. Berthe was full of sympathy. Desolated to find that Mademoiselle was souffrante... She knew what it was,– Berthe perched on the table,– Ah, she had been very ill herself, she, just after the birth of her child,–

"But Berthe, you told me that you were not married!"

"No, Mademoiselle. You are quite correct, Mademoiselle!" Berthe

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smiled, nodding her reddish, smooth head. "Un enfant de la guerre, Mademoiselle. He is a beautiful child, blue eyes, yellow curls, his father was a German,– I am from the side of Saint-Mihiel, moi. Refugee, me. If Mademoiselle should pass chez nous one of these days, my mother would gladly show her my child. Opposite to the Post Office, our house..."

"Go, Berthe, and see the cocoa does not burn," said Anne. "And make as many sandwiches as you can, Berthe."

"One will do one's best, Mademoiselle! C'est la guerre, Mademoiselle!"

...

Two carpenters came. They sawed and scrambled on the thin roof. They put a small, round, iron stove in Anne's room. It smoked. That didn't matter... It made the place warm...

...

The Medical Corps Corporal came in with a steaming mess kit full of dinner. He sat down on Anne's trunk.

"Say, somehow you remind me of my wife," he began...

...

Berthe kept the stove going in the boxlike room, and on her new bed, Anne slept...

...

Lieutenant Diggs knocked at Anne's door late that evening. Could he do anything for her? Fill her hot-water bottle? Sure, he used to do it often for his,– he stopped. He took the thing, and presently he came back with it, lukewarm and dripping. "I thought of you when I was up among the clouds at sunset," he said, "clouds all pink about the edges,– you'd have liked it. Some day I'm going to take you up with me."

"I'd like that," Anne said. He backed away. A beast, he'd been, to keep her up late last night... If she got sick, she'd leave, and then he,–

"If you want anything in the night, pound on the wall." He closed the door gently.

"Yes, thank you," Anne said...

...

Berthe came next morning bearing a bundle wrapped in blue cloth. From it she drew two linen sheets, a pillow cover. It was her mother who had sent them, she said. Her mother had great chagrin to apprehend that Mademoiselle was malade. With quick flaps and twitches she made the bed up. Anne snuggled down into the clean, white smoothness. "Ah, Berthe, tell your mother it's the first time I've been really comfortable for two months!" Berthe smiled down. These were tears in Mademoiselle's eyes...

...

The doctor sat down by the new stove. He put his muddy boots on

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Anne's trunk, leaned back. "Do you know, Miss Wentworth, you remind me, somehow, of my wife."

"Do I?" Anne said...

...

Night. Guns, booming. Anne raised her head up. The night was black outside the open window. Guns, somewhere off there in the blackness, pounding, pounding... French fog drifting through the open window... Sound, drifting with it... Louder than ever,– nearer than it had ever been. She lay back. The drive, beginning...

A voice. 'What?' She raised her head up. Someone had called her... No... It was nothing... Just the enormous, steady booming of the big guns... Men, fighting off there, somewhere, in the blackness... Men carrying bayonets and running forward... Shouting... Civilized men... Men, terrified of killing... Geoffrey,– no,– he wasn't out there any more. But there was,–

That voice. Surely a voice that called her... And yet, it wasn't... A spirit, rather, pulling... As if it would draw her inmost spirit from her... She lay back, eyes closed. The tall soldier, who had walked beside her... Suddenly she thought about him. She lay and trembled...

He was out there... Out there... Under that noise, that darkness... Him... Him... She had been thinking about him all this time... Had never stopped thinking... Under all the other things that messed her mind up, he had been there... Now she knew it. Through the noise, the darkness, his voice... His hand... What was this? Something,– Beyond the bursting shells... Beyond the noise, and night, and darkness...

She lay and quivered, waiting. Looking into the night beyond the window. Guns, pounding, pounding... If only you could leave your body,– Fly out, into the night, across it,– Be one with,– But it was with your body that you,– Only through bodies that two souls can,– You had to stay with your body till,– Till...

Reveille sounded. Thin, clear notes, jerking the damp air. 'I can't get 'em up I can't get 'em up I can't get 'em up in the morning; I can't get 'em up I can't get 'em up I can't get 'em up at all...' She heard men tramping, swearing, rattling mess kits. She heard the mess call, singing. Through the small, square, open window, she saw the greyness, growing...

...

Morning. She opened her eyes. What was it that had happened? Nothing,– she had been sick four days, and now was better. She got up. Something,– had happened,– in the night... What was it? Something,– escaping as she opened her eyes,– 'H'mph! Haw... Ha-a-awk, p'th...' said Mr. Carberry in the next room...

...

A little soldier slunk out the doorway of the kitchen, passing Anne as she came in. A pale, oval face, with big eyes... Face that Anne had

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noticed in dark corners of the hut each evening, gazing at her... Face that colored a little each night as he took his cocoa... He blushed that same way as she said 'Good morning...' Mr. Carberry bounced in.

"Well, well, well, you're up again?" he said. "My egg, here? I'd like it boiled three minutes." "Egg?" Anne asked. What did the man mean? There were no eggs in war-time... "Sure," said Carberry. He picked an egg up off the kitchen table. "Someone's been leavin' an egg here every morning. I had one every day since you been sick."

"Have you?" said Anne. She ran toward the hut door...

...

The slim boy walked across the mud field, slowly. The pale face colored when he heard her call him. She came, running. "Did you – bring – that – egg?" She was breathless...

"Yes, Ma'am." The boy flushed. Her... Next him... Christ, could she see him tremble? Could she feel,– "An old lady in town, she let me have one each day. I'd walk in town nights, and bring her sugar."

"Oh, thank you!" said Anne. "The eggs were so good! But you mustn't get me any more. I'm well now!"

"P-p-p'raps I could help you in the hut some night," he stammered. This was his chance, and he was letting it slip by... "I was a s-soda fountain c-clerk before the w-war," proudly, "I,– I understand that stuff." He'd be better than that clumsy MacLeod...

"I wish you would," said Anne...

...

The drive was on, they told her in the canteen. Say, hadn't she heard the guns? Yes, she'd heard them... In the night... Before dawn ... So this was the drive they'd all been talking about for so long? 'Yup!' It was the thirteenth of September, 1918.

...

"There's a General moved in to live at Avency," MacLeod said. MacLeod was grumpy. Why was all these soldiers clusterin' round her in the kitchen? They hadn't been so keen to help her 'fore she got sick. Here they was, a clutterin' up the whole place... Took a good scare about her goin' away, to make these durn bums see how much they liked her...

"What General?" Anne said.

"The guy that has them two girls round with him,– the two he gave a dance for over to Toul."

"Fine," said Anne. "I know them,– I'll get them to come out here and teach a French class..."

The others went back to work. MacLeod still sat there. "You ain't really goin' to ask them girls of the General's out here?" he said, solemn.

"They'd teach French to you people," said Anne. "I doubt if Mr. Carberry knows French, even if his books come. Why not ask

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them?" If the soldiers had some other girls to look at, perhaps they wouldn't,–

"The boys won't come here any more if you do." He stood beside her, looking out the window. Wasn't goin' to tell her the dirty things Red Flanagan had said about her... Nor how he'd had to give Red Flanagan a black eye one night behind C Hangar. Let the boys kid him, if they wanted, but when they mentioned Her, just let 'em look out... 'How ridiculous,' she was saying, 'why wouldn't the boys come?' "They ain't the kind of girls the boys like," he said. "The General brought them over here to see the Air Depot Show. They smoked cigarettes, right in the front row. Girls that smoke,–"

"Good Heavens!" said Anne. "How terrible! Did they?"

"Yup." He looked down at her. Was she shocked, or was she only kidding? She didn't believe the Bible... P'raps he'd been wrong,– Been defending Her from all the God damn roughnecks in the camp for nothing... She said She knew these two women of the General's ... Women who smoked,– bound to be immoral... If only she'd look at him, not keep those grey eyes gazin' out the window... Her face, pale, tired... God, he'd fight for Her... Even if She, Herself, smoked... 'Do these girls do anything else that isn't, isn't,–' she was asking...

"One of them's got her hair short. You know what the boys think 'bout girls with short hair!"

"*Do* they?" she said. She was laughing, looking at him. He flushed as he strode out. Her face, as innocent as a child's face... She didn't even know what it was that these things was a sign of... He oughtn'ta told her... Yet,– somehow, he'd got to save Her from these two women... 'Just the same, I think they're nice girls,' she was calling...

...

Chairs rattled when Anne pushed open the door of the Officers' Mess shack. Why, they were all standing, the way they did that first night ... Somebody singing somewhere down the table... Officers did not sing,– it was enlisted men who sang at their mess... This was,– All looking at her,– Heavens... The sound was growing louder... Vibrating the frail hut... Fitzpatrick, laughing at her, singing:

"For she's a jolly good fellow,
For she's a jolly good fellow,
For she's a jolly good fel-low..."

Anne's cheeks grew red... She sank to her seat...

...

There was an atmosphere of cheer about that evening's supper. 'Andrews said he'd heard they'd taken Mont-Sec. He said the Secretary of War was coming up tomorrow...'

"I've got a stove for your canteen, Miss Wentworth," Fitzpatrick bent across the table. "An open-fire, brazier sort of thing from the British officers' hut at Hattonville. They've moved out."

"Wonderful," said Anne. Much more important than the war, that

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... Andrews, the Adjutant, came in the door, pushed past them, going toward the Colonel's mess room. "Any news?" they called.

"Kilham's been shot down over toward Vigneulles." The conversation stopped. Men looked up, watching the Adjutant, disappearing through the end door.

'Kilham held the record, since Hoffman went,' 'Say, pass the beans...' 'D'ju see the new D.H. that came out?'

"I can get it put up tomorrow morning, if that's all right for you, Miss Wentworth," Fitzpatrick, saying... Anne looked at him. Oh, yes. The stove... The open-fire, brazier sort of thing... Round them the conversation went on. One did not mourn... Kilham had been out of luck, that's all...

"Oh, yes," said Anne. "That's fine..."

...

Next day was clear. First time in weeks that Anne could see the Toul hills. She walked out in the mud field and looked across hangars, to the northward. Hills, blue in the distance... Beside them,– where were the sausage balloons? You couldn't see them. Why, the front had moved, then...

High, above her the racket of an airplane engine stopped suddenly, leaving the air a strange blank... Anne's breath jerked. They fell, when,– She looked up. The thing was diving, straight down, at her. She stepped backward, rubbers catching, sucking... The thing would hit the hut, would hit her,– Great God... A roar. The plane flattened out, banked, went zooming upward. Funny, painted body, great wings with huge circles... A man's head. His hand, waving. The red-brown flying hat that Leonard Diggs wore... Anne waved back. The great plane grew smaller, smaller... She went in. Forty pounds of bread to cut this morning...

...

Men struggling through the narrow passage to Anne's room, grunting, carrying something heavy. A carved bureau, and a mirror, faded, tall, French; half of a Turkish rug. Kuntz's face, grinning above the mirror's aristocratic, pale gilt... "Say, the Major sentcher down these," he winked. "Been salvagin', up to Saint Me Hell, got this stuff out of a German dugout." Kuntz set the ancient mirror on the bureau. The mirror of a princess,– beyond its faded surface the small, crude, box-like room seemed civilized, and softened. "Pretty bum-lookin' mirror," said Kuntz, grinning...

"C'est la guerre!" Anne said...

...

Her family... The world... Where were they? She must hear... Anne walked toward the town, the French Post Office. She had written to her banker in Paris to send her mail there,– in the army mail everything got lost. The Bureau de Poste,– a squalid, dark place. Great posters on its dirty walls,– poilus in helmets yelling as they

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ran across dead Germans... Through the small, grilled window an old, old man peered at her. 'Ventvurt? No, there was nothing at all for Ventvurt...' Nothing... Anne stood, facing the mud outside the street door. Nothing... No mail for three weeks... The world, cut off... They might all be dead... God, would this war never be done, then?

"Mademoiselle! Bonjour, Mademoiselle!" That was a peasant woman speaking to her from a doorway... Would Mademoiselle make her the pleasure of taking a cup of coffee with her? Anne smiled. She entered the broad door, between two huge manure piles. The woman drew a stool before the tiny fire of twigs and talked, talked. It was as if she knew you needed cheering... There! Mademoiselle would be rested, comme ça! Mademoiselle must be fatigued, taking so long a walk after her illness... It was Berthe who had told her,– she was the mother of Berthe,– oui,– and this,– she picked up a fat, blue-eyed baby,– this was Berthe's baby. Enfant de la guerre, lui. Blond, like the German soldier who was his father! Would Mademoiselle,– she went and unlocked a cupboard in the corner, took out a tiny blue box,– would Mademoiselle take sugar in her coffee? 'On met de coté un petit peu.' [1] She looked down at Anne. Tiens, the eyes of the Américaine were full of tears now... She never took sugar in her coffee, she said. Heureusement... The woman put away the small box.

"How you are good to me, Madame!" the girl said...

...

"HEADQUARTERS COMMANDING GENERAL U.S.A.S. Z.O.A. A.E.F." a great sign over a house door. That would be Rose and Rosalie... Anne turned in. To hear a woman, talking in English again... To see someone that you,– that,– Maybe they wouldn't be here... They *must* be here... She went, two steps at a time, up the bare stairway. A door, pale blue... She knocked. 'Come in!' A girl's voice. Thank God... A blazing fire, and Rose and Rosalie in chairs before it, smoking. Before it, the good-looking Sergeant standing, his legs apart, talking to them. Over in the corner Epstein, working... 'Why Anne! Hello!' 'Pull up and dry your feet.' 'You've grown thin...' 'Here, have a cigarette!' What? Can't smoke? The Christians? Immoral? Oh! Peals of merry laughter... Anne sat down on the floor before the fire. Warmth, creeping through her jacket to her shoulders... There had been a life once that had had fires,– 'Gosh, what a dump this town is!' the girls, saying... Their voices, music... Why Life was really,–

"Come down and see our Mess Hall," Rose said. "We went to Saint-Mihiel with trucks, and got such lovely things out of the German dugouts." They clattered down the stairway. A barrack, its floor covered with a Persian carpet... A fireplace, with a log fire, before it a gilded sofa and Louis Quinze chairs... Faded mirrors, a piano, gilded,

[1] 'One puts aside a little bit.'

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with flowers painted on it... Scars on the gilt paint... "Stay for dinner, and play bridge!" the girls said...

"I'd like to," said Anne. Just to hear the familiar-strange music of their voices... She understood the Captain on the stairs at Neufchâteau... Understood Diggs... Understood little Edwards and his six eggs... "But I can't," she added...

...

On the wet road back, the Major stopped her.

"Walk down to the flying field with me," he said. "You bet," said Anne. "I've never really seen an airplane close to..." Pretty things, sitting on the field in neat rows. They walked between them. Strange devices painted on their sleek sides, the Hat in the Ring, Dice with Seven Up... Mechanics pushed a plane out on the field, and held it. From one of the hangars Leonard Diggs walked, a bungling figure in his flying suit, fastening his ear flaps. Diggs saluted, shook hands.

"Just going to take this old Sopwith Camel up, Sir. Ninety-Six telephoned that they need another..." They watched him pull his goggles down, and climb in. He laughed, and waved to Anne. A mechanic swung on the propeller. 'Contact.' 'Contact.' 'Coupez.' 'Coupez,' called Diggs. 'Contact.' Anne's skirts flew out behind her. The thing whirred, snorted. Mechanics were pulling the chocks away from its wheels. The plane went jolting, jiggling across the great field, then, like a thing inspired, up, up... Anne and the Major turned, and walked toward the hangar. The roaring engine stopped. Diggs' mechanic, walking toward the hangar, stopped and looked up. The Major stood still, head back. Anne looked. Over a line of telegraph wires the plane hung, going slower, slower... Below it lay the road, the wires, beyond the wires, trucks, standing in rows... 'If he can just coast past them wires,' breathed the mechanic, 'Christ!'

The plane stopped, poised. It teetered. Then, like a stone, it fell among the trucks, crumpling... The mechanic ran. Soldiers came out of hangars, and ran. Anne and the Major ran. She felt him pushing her into an automobile. 'Step on it,' he was saying, 'for God's sake...' The car speeded round the great field, onto the road, down the road. They stopped. The Major jumped out. Plunged down the steep bank. Between two trucks, the plane hung. An old umbrella, fallen between two barrels... From somewhere underneath it, liquid spurting... 'Gasoline. Christ...' Men, running... Pulling things and shouting... From somewhere, under all the mess, a groan came. Anne stood, her fists clenched in her pockets. Would they never get him? She turned her face away. That horrid sickness... Couldn't look... Couldn't keep from looking... Why didn't they hurry... Why didn't they do something...

The huge bulk of the Major taking command. He alone, it seemed, knew what they should do... Oaths... 'Ten men on that end there,' he was shouting. 'Chop away the aileron, God damn you! Smash

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those struts...' Little Diggs, underneath it, groaning,– you could hear him... It was the only thing you could hear... 'God, if it catches fire...' Lieutenant Upham next her, on the bank there... 'The ambulance! The ambulance!' called someone.

"Gone to Nancy to get a load of champagne." Upham's face was white, his lips were trembling. "Here's a Cadillac, Sir,–"

Leonard Diggs' hair flopped forward as they lifted him up. Arms and legs, dangling... They hung him, limp, along the car's seat. The long lock flopped back from the white face. The big car moved off...

...

Evening. A line stretched from the counter. A mechanic put his franc down. 'Two sandwiches!' he said. Anne looked up. She'd heard that voice... That afternoon... Diggs' mechanic. She gazed. She could not speak... He shook his head. "I told him he'd ought to give her more gas," he said. "He'd ought to have known better than to choke her like that. He was gettin' awful nervous, awful jumpy,–" 'Who?' the man behind asked.

"Diggs."

...

Anne closed the door of her room. Wouldn't hear Diggs tonight, through the slim partition, hanging his Sam Browne belt up, puffing from cold, brushing his teeth... Creaking into the sleeping bag on his cot... She'd asked him if he wanted Pierre to take it out and air it. 'No,' he had said, 'I shut the flap and keep the heat in. I've got about six months' heat collected in there...' Poor Diggs... She reached for a piece of Y.M.C.A. paper, spread it before her. Must write to the family... Even if she hadn't heard for three weeks,– She unscrewed her pen. Diggs, groaning somewhere under the crushed plane... Diggs' hair, flopping... Couldn't say anything about Diggs,– 'I've actually walked down onto the flying field,' she wrote, 'such amusing emblems they paint on their airplanes...' A man's hair flopping forward... She laid her pen down...

...

Fitzpatrick strode into the canteen next morning early. Behind him came a soldier. He'd heard Lieutenant Diggs lived here,– which was his room? He followed Anne through the dark passage beyond the storeroom. What in Hell was the man sleeping up here for? 'Got to get his stuff,' he said, 'and turn it over,–' The room was cold and boxlike. From nails on the wall olive drab clothes hung, empty. Fitzpatrick took down a leather coat with a fur lining, a soft, deep collar. "You got a fur coat?" he said to Anne. "No? Here, take this. Oh, that's all right, it belongs to Uncle Sam. What? Diggs? Died in the hospital at Toul last night."

"Oh," said Anne. And then: "I'll have your coffee ready when you get through..."

...

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Anne sliced bread. Forty loaves today, forty tomorrow... Forty every day until the war, some day, might be over... Four years,– Thirty tin cans lined up on the table, waiting. She whacked them with the axe. Condensed milk, spurting. And people thought that War would be exciting... There was MacLeod coming to get his sandwich. Outside the window Lieutenant Upham passed him. The Sergeant turned his head the other way and walked past. 'Sergeant,' Upham, weakly, 'er,–' MacLeod turned, looked at him, his eyes half closed. Upham turned away, and walked on quickly. MacLeod stood, watching him... And then he turned, and came into the kitchen.

"Mornin'!" He smiled...

...

Evening. Everyone coughed. Anne leaned against the counter, looked out into the hut. Smoke swirled. Men sat in the dim light of little lamps, playing checkers, coughing. Anne stepped out to stand by the new brazier, with its cheerful, open fire. 'If that there was a good, steam radiator, it would be nice,' said Edwards. 'Boy! You've said it!' They spat into the fire. Anne laughed. No use, to make things beautiful for Americans,– they didn't like it... She went back to the kitchen.

"Your turn at the oven!" MacLeod took his feet out.

"Tell me," she sat down next him. He was so huge, so,– "Why was it that you went past Upham today without saluting?" MacLeod looked troubled. So she'd seen that... He sat, silent, flushing...

"The guy's yellow," Hopkins piped up. "None of the boys salutes him. But he's got a uncle who's a Congressman, or something,–"

"Shut up!" MacLeod said.

"He told me himself that he was yellow," Anne said. "I'd like to know why."

"Well,–" MacLeod tipped his chair back. Might's well tell her... "They sent a lot of us down to Chateau Theery to haul wounded on a truck train. Him and another lewy had command of it. We hauled wounded all one day, and that night, this guy Upham sends for me and Sergeant Allen. We hadn't eat nothin' for twelve hours, and we'd been on our backs for two hours, helpin' the boys to fix up one of the trucks that got bust. Shells was droppin', all the while, and I suppose we wuz gettin' a little touchy. Well, Lieutenant Upham, he allowed that if we could manage to put a couple more trucks on the blink, we could most prob'ly go home. 'Lieutenant,' we says, 'we'll keep them trucks a goin' till Hell freezes over! And if you don't like the shellin',' Allen he says, 'you can keep the truck that's busted and set under it!' Well, next day we got it pretty hot, carryin' them wounded. An' they was a mess, too, I'll say, bloody and everything, jolting round in them trucks. Upham, every time he looked at 'em, he'd go green. Pretty soon him and the other lieutenant, they sent a telegram to the

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Colonel, sayin' we was all sick. Lemoyne, that French Canadian feller, put the message into French for 'em to send it. Lemoyne, he told me an' Allen about it next day. Next night we got our orders to come back here."

"But they didn't get away with it!" said Hopkins, cheerful.

"No." MacLeod clasped his big hands behind his head. "Allen an' me, an' the two Corp'rals, we went to the Colonel. Told him there wasn't a man in the whole outfit wuz sick. Told him there wasn't a man in the outfit that'd a let on if he had been, not while we was handlin' them wounded. Say, I wish you'd seen the old man's face!"

"But they didn't do nothin' to them lieutenants," said Hopkins. "Upham, he's got an uncle,–"

"But there won't nobody in the camp salute 'em," drawled MacLeod, "and his uncle in Congress won't do him no good when the war's done!" Anne beat her toe against the wood box. Outside somebody was playing:

"There are smiles that make you hap-py,
There are smiles that make you..."

"Say," said Hopkins, "I don't blame Upham for takin' his Croix de Guerre off..."

...

A strange smell permeated Anne's small room. Smoke... Burning leather... She rushed to the stove. Her shoes,– the last pair,– fallen off the blocks of wood she'd propped them on and wizened into hard lumps. She sat down on the bed, gazed at them. She laughed. No shoes this side of her trunk locked up in Paris... Have to go there. Paris... Lights... Warm houses... People you knew... Excitement... She called up Y. Headquarters. Orders would take a week, they said. She put the hook up. She'd go tomorrow, damn the orders... Paris, where you could walk on pavements... No mud... She called the Major's office. Yes, there'd be ferry pilots going in the morning. A new train,– went by Toul,– the railroad all along the Marne was free again now... Sure, the truck would call for Anne at five A.M. Not at all, glad to!

"Thank you," said Anne.

...

A frozen, rutted road that led among cold, pinkish fields of frosty, winter grass... The truck, bumping. Romans had marched north along this road once... She had walked,– An icy wind that met you, biting your face. Damp, white fogs rising out of hollows. Somewhere the sunrise, turning them a pale pink... A ferry pilot sat on the truck seat next Anne. His face was blue and mottled. He had not shaved. He squinted his eyes against the wind, grim, bored. He'd made this trip back, twenty times, he told her. Back to Paris, out to Orly Field, the next day fly a plane up here again, and wait round. Wait and

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wait,– play poker with that cut-throat gang in town there... Leave all your money in this dump, and then at last get back to Paris dead broke... And people thought that being an aviator was fun...

They stopped. The road was jammed with trucks and soldiers. 'An ammunition dump,' the driver, saying... Soldiers standing round in tin hats, their breaths rising in little puffs through the chill air. One of them looked at Anne, and smiled. 'Hello,' he said. He came and climbed up on the wheel. Anne held her hand out. Ouch, how he hurt,– 'Say, but it's good to see a white woman!' he was saying... Another came. They lined up. They came in a steady stream, one hard, red hand after another reaching upward... 'Hello,' she said, 'how are you?' 'Good morning...' She laughed. Her hand beginning to grow lame... 'First honest-to-God woman I seen in three months,' they said as they jumped down. The truck snorted, forged its way forward. A row of disappointed faces, backing away... Anne waved. The soldiers waved. 'Good-bye, Y!' 'Good-bye, America!' 'Good luck!' A starved look in their faces...

"Step on it," said the ferry pilot grimly, "we're going to miss that train!" Kuntz, beside Anne, grinning...

"Can't miss a Frog train..."

...

The ferry pilots bought Anne a military ticket. Getting on was easy... Just sit, and joggle all day... Getting by the guards in Paris would be the trouble...

...

Evening. Anne rubbed mist off the window, and peered out into the moving darkness. Pale, blue lights, whirling... Dim outlines of houses... Windows, shuttered... Paris... The Gare du Nord, and its pale, smoky train shed... Crowds, passing the gendarmes. Madame had anything to declare in her bag? Madame had nothing. Madame had orders? Madame did not understand, it seemed. 'Ygrec Em Say Ah, militaire,' she muttered. American pilot, pushing from behind her. 'Ten-ez!' The guard at the other side was Sudanese. Anne backed away, and went to his gate. He grunted as she ran past.

Paris... Pavements... Dim, blue lights... Three taxis, standing, their red-nosed drivers talking to the pilots. Anne stepped out. They wanted to go to Clichy. For no one would they go across the river... An American army truck bumped toward them. The pilots hailed it. They helped Anne in. 'Pigs of Americans...' The taxi-drivers grumbled in the darkness... Paris...

The truck bounced toward the rue de l'Université. A city, all about you... It had seemed that all cities must have melted, leaving just mud, and mediæval towns and great fields... But here it was,– the civilization that they fought for,– France... The rue de l'Université. The clipped hedge with the leaves that tasted bitter... The shutters, all closed... Anne thanked the pilots.

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"Not at all! It was a pleasure!" they said...

...

The familiar door of the apartment where she and Joan had once lived. She pushed it open. The smell of floor-wax... Why, it was home, this...

...

To lie in bed, and have one's breakfast brought in... The luxury of it... Soft footsteps, padding past the door. "Clémentine!" Anne called. The door opened. "Ah, Mademoiselle! Vous voilà de retour! How goes Mademoiselle? She is well? Mademoiselle has the air of being thin."

"Anne!" Rosalind dodged past Clémentine. She jumped up on the bed, drawing bare feet under her blue wrapper, shaking back her soft hair. The way she used to shake it long ago, when it always hung down ... Same brown curls... "Tell me," she said, "where have you been? How are you?"

"I've been at a dump called 'Avency-le-Sec,'" said Anne. She lay back...

...

"Where's Joan?" It had to come, that question... Anne hated herself that she should dread to see Joan...

"She's gone with the Red Cross, to a hospital at Dijon." Well then, you wouldn't have to,– Poor old Joan... "It knocked her up awfully, – Monks' death."

"What did they tell her?" Anne said.

"The Colonel told her about it himself, Joan said that he was most awfully good to her." Rosalind's blue eyes looked out the window toward the Eiffel Tower. How many times they had all looked up toward that ugly, trestled spike there... The Eiffel Tower would always carry you back to,– "It seems Monks had been at target practice and his revolver had been jamming. They think he must have been fiddling with it, trying to fix it. Anyway, it went off. That's all they know..." Anne, too, lay gazing at the Eiffel Tower.

"Is it?" she said...

...

"But how you cough, my child! How you are thin!" Madame de Mourgues drew Anne's hand through her arm, patting it as they walked through the familiar, clean hall. "My sister will be so content to have you here," said Madame. "How does it go, the war? What do they tell you out along the front?"

"Nothing," said Anne, "but I have brought you lots of sugar, Madame..."

...

Anne walked along the quai, and out across the familiar bridge that crossed the river. Paris... White, clean, with purple shadows under the quais, the bridges. A different world from France, this... Your

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feet were light here. You didn't have to pull them, hear the mud smack, kick them ahead of you to get the clods off... Women in high-heeled shoes, who stepped about smooth pavements. The river, rushing between its quais... An old man, fishing... A sand barge, ploughing up behind its tug boat. The Trocadéro's bizarre towers, over Passy. The towers of Notre-Dame, dim, toward the Cité. Why, this was what you fought for...

Air Service Headquarters in Avenue Montaigne. Miss Featherstone, gone, the Marquise, in pearls and black satin, told Anne. Miss Featherstone had married Major Moore, she said. The Major'd had a nervous breakdown, worrying over the Liberty's and D.H. 4's.

"The aviators call them 'Flaming Coffins,'" Anne said.

"Oh, I know. She's taken the Major to Nice to make him forget..." Anne went upstairs. Forget young men, sitting with faces in their hands, 'cooked like a...' She looked through open doors. There seemed to be a hundred new lieutenants. A hundred new, and very pretty girls here... The little spot of grease on the white panelling behind Brock's desk had spread. He sat there, chair tipped back, his head against it. He let his chair down with a bump when he saw Anne. "Well, say, look who's here!" He grasped her hand and shook it. Shook and shook... He pulled a chair up for her, sat down, tipped back in the old way, his legs dangling. "Say, have a cigarette?" he held a package toward her.

"I can't. My uniform," Anne laughed.

"Glad there's some virtuous girls left in France," said Brock. "Say, what do you think of the new janes we got round here? They got some upstairs that can't either typewrite or talk English. They got a German girl up there, copyin' all the cables,– pretty, light hair... Eh bien, as the old lady says, cella gare!"

"And how is Madame Vidon?" Anne asked. A shrivelled, white-haired old woman, in a black veil... Her thin arms round Anne's neck, tears in her bright eyes... Chairs, wobbling underneath them... 'In embracing you, Mademoiselle, I,'– How vivid that was... France,–

"She's just fine," Brock was saying. "Wakes me up every morning by chirping: 'Go to Hell, my son.' Thinks that means Bon Joor in American. I took another fellow out to spend the night the other day. Say, if he didn't laugh when the old lady popped in. She told me afterward she never seen men that woke up so jolly in the morning."

"Lettice?" Anne looked toward the closed door of the Colonel's office.

"She left a month ago. Funny where she went to, too. No one seems to know. Mail comes in, forwarded from her home. I put it on Lind's desk. He takes it away nights..." Anne rose to go. Brock held his bony hand out. "It's a great life," he said. Anne shook the thin hand. It had a way of going limp inside yours...

"If you don't weaken," she said.

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"Well anyway," said Brock, "you ain't the kind that weakens..."

...

The Place Vendôme, Anne watched a British major and a chic creature of the demi-monde who stepped toward a taxi outside the Hôtel Ritz... Wished she was well dressed... Tired of uniforms... And ragged shoes, with mud stains... The rue de la Paix. Strings of pearls, sparkling diamonds, on dark blue velvet... Filmy handkerchiefs... Glass phials of amber liquid... Anne turned in. Her whipcords brushed against the taffeta curtains. 'Mademoiselle désire?' Ah, they had a very delicious soap, flavored with verveine,– a tall, manicured finger upraised... Mademoiselle had not need of something else, perfume, powder for the face? Anne smiled. Why not? Harmless, pretty things, and life was short, now... She nodded. Oui, for Mademoiselle the powder should be 'rachel...' And the perfume? A-ah! The vendeuse thought the perfume should be 'L'ambréine.' For Mademoiselle is passionate, her soul vibrates, n'est-ce-pas?

"You bet!" Anne laughed...

...

The Bank. A crowd of people chatting, laughing, wedging their way about before the mail desk. American officers, officials of the Red Cross, women in uniform, and elderly Victorian women,– the kind who lived in Paris and carried little dogs under their plump arms... Anne shoved her way among them. A tea party... Bishop Grant, her father's old friend, stopped her, talked, patting her shoulder. Benign old man, who really believed in his God... Who would ask God to fight on our side... The Bishop had not seen War... There was the girl from Iowa, just back from the front, full of talk. 'The boys...' 'The Saint-Mihiel Drive...' There was Barry Caldwell, who asked her to dine that night. The S.O.S. was,– a wry smile... And there was Greenbaum, from the hospital on his way to Syria, to stop the typhus. She'd lunch with him? She had to get mail, and shoes out of her trunk, and read the American papers to find out about the great war,– he'd wait for her in the reading room? All right...

...

The New York papers, in the reading room, hanging from sticks. On the front page a face, handsome, careless, smiling through the blur of the newspaper... Why, that was Hoffman... 'AMERICA'S ACE SHOT DOWN...' Anne bent over, reading. A brave story. No mention of fire... Of blackened hands, covering that debonair face... 'Cooked, like a beefsteak...' Greenbaum, waiting here for her to go to luncheon. "Ready?" he said. Anne laid down the paper. You couldn't find out about the war from that.

"Yes, ready," she said...

...

Letters, in her broad, military pocket. Luxurious feeling that one could read them later... New shoes on her feet. Feet wouldn't be cold,

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wet, any more now... Greenbaum, smiling at her through his heavy glasses. Telling her how Brophy and the little Quartermaster had been shipped off... How Mary Denton had died,– too bad... Should they go to Voisin's? Mouth, watering at the idea of lunch at Voisin's... About them the pleasant, urban racket of the rue Scribe...

...

Bookshops on the parapet of the Quai Voltaire. Anne lingered among them. An hour of luxurious idleness between lunch and tea. Old, leather-covered, tattered books... A critique on the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau... A translation of Tacitus, marked by some student of the Latin Quarter... A look up, now and then, through interlacing branches, to the blue mist rising from the river. Deep purple shadows under the arches of the Pont du Carrousel... She turned the corner into the rue Bonaparte. A bell clanged as she pushed open the door to a little shop where Greenbaum had told her they sold posters. The smell of dust and papers,– a small, black-bearded man who bobbed up. Madame wanted posters? Ah, he had plenty,– a wave of his stout arm,– but it was not worth the pain of taking them down. These Americans, a great nuisance, coming like this! He wished that all Americans would get out of France and leave them alone in peace! Eh, bien! He disappeared through a door behind... In the street outside Anne laughed. Blue lamps being lighted, blurring a circle of mist under their deep shades... She hailed a horse cab, 'Rumpelmayer!' The horse's hoofs going plop, plop... Damp darkness, brushing past you... The feeling of people in the darkness... Mystery... Paris...

Randolph, tall, pale, thin, in his American uniform, leaned on a cane, limped slowly. Rosalind, beside him, her blue coif floating. Affection, sympathy shining in her blue eyes. His nurse... Anne watched them as they came under the arcade toward her. The brave swing of the famous ace among the crowd, the dash of the French aviator, quite gone... "Anne! God, but it's nice to see you!" The cane had to go into the left hand,– and that hand hurt,– weight to be shifted cumbrously before he could shake hands... 'Damn,' under his breath, as the cane dropped... Rosalind's hand, instantly, under his elbow, as Anne stooped, picked it up... The waiters, obsequious, pulling out chairs... 'Mon Capitaine' would sit here? 'Mon Capitaine' would give his cane? He would be well so. Anxious hands under his elbows, helping him down. 'Hell!' he muttered. He ordered pastry and tea. A Malaga for him and Anne...

They leaned their elbows on the white cloth, looking across at one another, searching. The war did things to people... You never could really tell, until you saw them... Anne watched the two faces across the table from her. Rosalind,– not changed, only very tired... War and peace both alike to Rosalind: her love for Randolph... But Randolph,– Pain that had racked him... Drawn the color out of his face... Made the muscles of his cheeks twitch... Weariness of pain... Disgust

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at helplessness... A growing disgust... His eyes, haggard... Looking at Anne, searching... He smiled. Anne, looking thinner... But prettier, somehow... Almost beautiful, Anne looked... More like her mother... Must have met some fellow up there,– fallen in love, perhaps,–

"We've been sitting in the Bois, Anne," said Rosalind. If this party was to be pleasant, they mustn't just sit and look at each other like this... "We saw such a lovely lady walking out there. Tall, slim, dressed in smooth grey with a great, fluffy fur thing. A black velvet beret, and hair under it the loveliest pale gold, almost straw-color. Her eyes,– my goodness, you ought to have seen the look she gave us! I guess,"– Rosalind patted Randolph's arm,– "she was annoyed by Randolph's staring at her." Randolph held a plated knife between the fingers of his thin hand. With his thumb he bounced the blade against the table, staring at it. Rosalind laughed. "He always did like pretty ladies, didn't you, darling?" Rosalind sighed. They didn't either of them seem to listen... Anne should have kidded... Instead, she sat there staring, watching his knife bounce... Anyway, here were the tea things...

Randolph's eyes rose from the knife and met Anne's. In his face not a twitch, not the movement of a muscle. But in the eyes themselves,– a look... Anne's eyes left his, gazed beyond him out the window. A room... Yellow-green light rising through the closed shutters... The scent of lilies... A woman, pale blue and gold, standing before a mirror, speaking... Her eyelids half closed... 'It is the custom in France that the men bow first...'

"She was a good-looker," Randolph said, easy. The faintest twinkle in the dark eyes...

"Was she?" said Anne...

...

To have had a hot bath, and to be dressing to go out to dinner... The Luxury of it! Anne dressed slowly. Let Barry Caldwell wait... She would not dispel that sweet, relaxed, untroubled feeling... Civilian clothes. She'd bought a new, French dress of soft black velvet. It hung from her shoulders after the new style. It made her very straight, and smooth, and thin. She put on Rosalind's black velvet hat. Not bad-looking,– She leaned across the mantel toward the mirror, powdering her nose. Wicked... It took the shine off... Made you look well... Smell good... White gloves... And Rosalind's nice slippers... A fur, lent by the Red Cross woman down the entry. 'You look lovely,' she said...

"Ah, ha!" Barry Caldwell sprang toward her. Why, she was,–

"Come on," said Anne...

...

The restaurant was in the Champs-Elysées. Glass walls and roof enclosed a sort of garden. The white surfaces of the tables seemed to

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float in darkness, the lamp on each small table lost under its black shade. Above the tablecloths there floated faces. Faces, bending over, eating, faces leaning back and chatting. Uniform buttons... The white shirt fronts of waiters...

"Nice of you to wear black, I can just see your face," said Barry Caldwell, "a disembodied spirit." He looked across at the white face, the grey eyes shining. Fool, to have sat opposite this girl three weeks and thought her homely! It had been her brain, then, that he'd been keen on,– that was before they sent him to the S.O.S. Tonight, why the girl was filled with radiating beauty... Those eyes... She'd changed, somehow... Or was it your resistance that was weakened? Thoroughly enchanting, this girl opposite to him in black velvet, the tablecloth lighting her pale face. Dangerous, this,– better talk about your wife, set her between you... War, did things,– In all those three weeks at Aviation he'd never mentioned his wife,– didn't need to...

"What rot we write home," said Barry Caldwell. "Now if I write to my wife that I'm not doing much of anything, that I dined tonight in one of the best restaurants in Paris, opposite to a beautiful woman in black velvet, it'll make her unhappy. She'll feel that all the sacrifices she's making are for nothing. She wants to feel that I'm on an important mission."

Anne looked across at the man's face. He'd talked about his wife on purpose... Needn't have done that,– she had known all along that he was married... He leaned back, and his high cheek bones cast shadows upward. Something a little softened in the keen eyes... Something a little dangerous, now, in the man's face... Something,– it gave the world a new tang... "What *is* your mission?" she asked. He laughed.

"Oh, taking Congressmen to see a safe sector of the front. Swell way to promote action in the great war! Last one I took was blind. Insisted on getting out, feeling a shell hole. We both got some gas. I came back teary. I wrote my wife that,– thought she might think I was just a little noble. Women don't mind physical suffering,– God knows they get too much of it! To them it's a sort of noble, cleansing fire,–"

"Hoffman burned up," said Anne, "why didn't they put that in the American papers?"

"Why don't they put it in the paper that forty per cent of all our aviators burn up?" said Barry Caldwell. "Why don't they print that it's because we don't have parachutes, because our planes are no good?" He laughed. "If people knew what War was really like, it wouldn't go on." They helped themselves to caviar from a great bowl.

"Why don't we tell them?" Anne said.

"Partly the censor. Partly because we're cowards. I'm in the S.O.S. on regular duty. It takes seven men down there to keep one up front. Well, those seven, after a certain dose of boredom,–" He looked at

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her. Her eyes,– she knew... "Half the letters I censor are stringing the folks at home on to think their little darling is at the front," he went on. "That's to protect their families. Families have got to think we're brave, self-sacrificing heroes. They've got to think we live a sort of glorified, celibate life here."

"There's one noble thing about the S.O.S.," said Anne. "That is that every one there would rather go up front."

"Not all of 'em," said Barry Caldwell, "but most. And can you blame them? Danger's fun. Danger's exciting. You go to war thinking you're going to see excitement. And you find that seven eighths of it is a worse bore than ever Peace was. That's why I object to writing home and giving the impression that war is danger. Most of it is boredom, and moral slumping. If every one would write home exactly what they do here, every woman in the U.S. would be a pacifist when we get back."

"Yes," said Anne, "I know. I've been in Bordeaux."

"You've been in Avenue Montaigne," said Barry Caldwell. "An accurate description of what goes on there would make a swell hit! Not that I blame 'em. I know exactly why they act the way they do act. It's part of War. Same thing goes on in all wars. What I object to is that the people at home have to be guarded from it. They'd better swallow that, too. First thing you know people will be teaching children all over again that War is noble. I'd like to see 'em stop saying 'Johnny, your ancestors went nobly out to Make the World Free,' and begin saying 'Your ancestors got the world into such a sad mess that there was no way to get out of it except by the ancient method of the beast and savage.' I'd like to see them stop saying 'Johnny, this is your father's sword!' and begin saying 'Johnny, this is a photograph of the French girl that your father lived with. Your dear father was so thoroughly bored by the Great War that he got pleasure from a woman like that.'"

"Would that make Johnny any less anxious to go and try it?" said Anne. The man laughed.

"No, but it would make Johnny's wife and Johnny's mother twice as determined to keep him at home."

"I doubt," said Anne, "if you'd ever make people at home believe what war's like."

"Damn it," said Barry Caldwell. "There's a sort of conspiracy against it. The publishers are in it,– they've gotten out hundreds of volumes of silly letters, each one a pail of whitewash. And then the orators that raise the money tell people all sorts of lies. Liberty Loan speeches,– all this rot about our army is the 'cleanest army.' Nobody ever tells 'em it isn't moral cleanness,– merely better physical arrangements. If they could see statistics,–" He handed her a cigarette, and held a match up. "What we remember about war, and what they remember, are going to be two entirely different matters."

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"Some day we'll have to write about it," Anne said.

"And will they print it?" Barry Caldwell shook his head. They pushed their chairs back. "Let's go to the Folies-Bergère, Miss Wentworth," he said.

...

The theatre was dark. They edged their way past people's knees to their seats. Sat back. 'Ah...' Girls, in bright dresses, dancing... Weaving in and out, kicking slim legs, throwing kisses... Slim legs with silk stockings, silver slippers... No mud... No heavy shoes here... Lithe legs... Petticoats that opened... An American major and a captain in the side box shouted, their voices raucous... A Marine M.P. leaned over the side of the box toward the Major. 'Less noise sir,' he was whispering, 'less noise, sir!'

"Making the world safe!" said Barry Caldwell.

...

Jazz music, crowds milling back and forth... Tobacco smoke, swirling... People's shoulders, jiggling to the music... People buying drinks at little tables... Italian officers with girls... British officers with girls... Portuguese officers with girls... American officers with girls... American soldiers with girls... French aviators, British aviators, American aviators... Everybody buying drinks with girls. Girls laughing, winking at one another, patting the officers, pulling military hats off... Vivacity, music, smoke... Swirling... Swirling...

Anne and Barry Caldwell stood, their backs against a pillar. A stout American major sang at a table near them. His cap was tilted toward the French girl next him. Her hand on his shoulder, beating time... 'Maddamuzell from Armentières, parlez Voo-ooo!'

A slim Marine lieutenant, a red band on his sleeve, edged in next Anne. 'Yes Sir, it's him. I warned him twict.' She heard the soldier M.P. behind him saying... 'Sir,' the Marine Lieutenant saluting the Major, 'I suggest that the Major return to his billet.' 'The Hell you do!' The Major pushed his hat back. His heavy hand fell on the table, rattling glasses... 'Maddamuzell from Armentières, parlez-vooo-o-o...' 'Sir, I have a taxicab at the door to take the Major to his billet...' 'The Hell you have! Maddamuzell from Armentières, pa-r...' 'Unless the Major returns to his billet, it will be my duty to accompany him to the rue Sainte-Anne...'

"Let's move on," said Barry Caldwell. To the Marine Lieutenant, as he passed, he said, "Hello, Sam..."

"You know him?" Anne asked as she edged into her seat.

"Yes, I was in college with him. Fine feller, Sam! Joined the Marines, because he was sure that they'd see action. Then his battalion got stuck here on M.P. duty. His job is to come here and to the Casino every evening at ten-thirty to send the majors and colonels, who are drunk, home. Soldiers aren't allowed to arrest majors and colonels, so they spot 'em and point 'em out to Sam when he gets here. Swell

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job! Well," Barry Caldwell laughed, "if he hadn't been doing this, he'd have got his damned head shot off, at Château-Thierry. He thinks of course, that he'd have liked that better..."

"It's a great war," said Anne.

...

The finale, wonderful with color. Before the chorus of girls, a woman, dressed like a peacock... All beads and feathers, sinuous, bare arms and bare, white stomach... Kissing her hands, singing, waving. The house shouting... Chorus girls, kicking slim legs, singing and throwing kisses... A bedlam of sound, the curtain, falling, falling... From the stage box an American captain, and two lieutenants, leapt onto the stage, shouting, dodging the curtain. Pursuing vanishing small, high-heeled slippers... Gaitered legs disappearing behind gilt pots of flowers... The curtain falling, falling, cutting the legs off... 'Oh, la! la!' A woman's voice from somewhere... Laughter... The audience, crowding up the aisles toward the exits...

Outside the theatre, people clutching at one another's elbows. Blue, soft darkness... Paris...

"Are you all right?" said Barry Caldwell.

"All right," Anne said.

...

"Mademoiselle!" That was Clémentine waking you, shutting your window... Night still,– the train for Toul left at seven in the morning. Anne rubbed her eyes. Horrible, this getting up and dressing... Shivering so she could hardly pick her clothes up... Wondering if the concierge could get a taxi... Wondering if her original travel order would take her up on this new train... She'd probably be arrested... Rosalind stole in, in her blue wrapper.

"How did you think that Randolph looked?" She shivered. "Anne, what shall I do to get him better? He's so fed up. If I could only get him away from hospitals and doctors!"

"Marry him," Anne said.

...

Anne stood on the sidewalk in her greatcoat. She'd miss her train, unless the concierge could find a taxi in three minutes. At last,– Anne waved a package of American cigarettes. The taxi stopped. She piled in bags and roll strap. A box of books that she had taken from the American library. Shopkeepers rolling up iron shutters in the semi-darkness... Sweeping off sidewalks... Water, running down the gutters in swift, clear streams... Senegalese soldiers swashing the streets with great brooms... Yellow white houses, with their windows still closed... A thud. The box of books came sliding down on top of Anne. The taxi banged twice, stopping. Anne saw its rear wheel roll up past the window... A crowd collected... The driver declaimed, gesticulating. That was what came to a good honest man, when he was foolish enough to take these Américaines he told them. Anne hunted

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wildly for another taxi. Must catch that train... At last, here came one. He didn't want to take her. 'Pas d'essence.' She gave him cigarettes. He threw her things in. Thank God, the station...

Train for Toul, still there, puffing in the dark train shed, its blue lights lighted. Anne followed the portress through the barricade of sand bags. Officers hurrying toward the train... Soldiers, carrying packs on their backs, running... A Red Cross nurse, running with a lieutenant... Orders, tickets, billets militaires, Anne's Ordre de Transport, a flabby thing of white paper and yellow... Thank God he was in a hurry, didn't read it...

"Militaire! Passez, Madame. Passez! Passez!"

...

James Eaton had been at a bombing school for three months. Today,– he threw his chest out, sat up a little straighter on the grey seat of the first-class carriage,– he was leaving Paris for the Great War... Pretty good to catch this train after going last night to the Casino... The Casino,– Gee... And after it,– Gosh... Some place, Paris! No wonder those birds that stayed here went to pieces... Why, that girl had,– God... Well, he'd got by... But poor old Reynolds,– They said if you went and got a prophylactic treatment right off,– Hard to find prophylactic stations in a town like,– Well, anyway, that was over... Next time,– Gosh, there might not be a next time... The Front,– He looked up proudly at his initials on the huge new duffle bag in the rack. 'First Lt. A.E.F....' The French Captain, sitting by the window, turned a sad, quiet face toward Eaton and, turning it away again, he sighed. Eaton glanced at him, shyly. A row of ribbons on the old boy's chest... Legion of Honor, Croix de Guerre, Moroccan,– others... Why, you were travelling with a hero... Eaton looked out the window. The first shreds of greyness were creeping in among the moving people on the platform. Nice to be on a military train... Nothing but men here... Everyone in uniform... Hungry... How did one eat on these trains? One probably didn't,– not going to the front... A little thing like food,– The door of the carriage opened. A girl looked in. Eaton could just see her head and shoulders, her white collar, her hat with its red triangle,– American,– She must have got the wrong train... She looked at the French officer, looked at him, looked back along the platform... 'Ici!' she said, 'ici!' James Eaton shifted on his seat, looked at her. Annoying, to find a girl, on a military train like this... A girl with a whole lot of heavy packages and things, that you must heave up... A quiet girl, who paid no attention to you whatever... Seemed to know what she was about, this girl... Didn't seem to think she'd got the wrong train ... An old Frog came by in uniform, talking French, selling pink tickets. The girl took one. The French officer took one. Tickets seemed to be free... Only thing in France that *was* free, by God... James Eaton began to wish he'd got one. Couldn't very well ask the girl

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what the ticket was for... Beastly never to be able to get away from women... Even in war... The girl sat, quiet, looking out the window. The French officer sat, gazing, absorbed in his thoughts, sad thoughts, – he was infinitely tired of them... James Eaton wished that he had thoughts to be absorbed in... He looked at his watch. Wondered why the fool train didn't start. It was past time,– you'd think military trains would start on the tick,– it seemed they didn't. The girl had a silver tag fastened to a loose chain round her wrist. Her name, engraved on it. He couldn't read it. The French officer had one,– that must be the latest thing in 'dog tags.' He wished he'd got one. Would, the next time that he went to Paris... If there was a next time... He smiled. Going to the front now...

The train started. It jiggled, slowly, out of the dark train shed. Under them a flat wheel went ker-plunk, ker-plunk, ker-plunk. You could see the girl's face now, in the daylight. Fine, clean-cut face,– not pretty... Somehow, it was the girl's eyes that you looked at. Serious, clear eyes, gazing past the tops of smutty buildings, seeing something,– Not those buildings that the girl was seeing... The kind of girl you'd like to talk to, if you knew her... She got up, crossed in front of James Eaton, went out into the narrow corridor, disappeared. Neat, grey-blue uniform, with flaring, military pockets, trig, like a riding habit... James Eaton hoped she'd come back. But she didn't, and presently the French Captain left, too. The young man, in his neat uniform, sat alone. Under him the flat wheel went ker-plunk, ker-plunk...

...

Anne, in the dining car, sat in pleasant solitude, sipping her coffee. Outside the window she watched a little creek. Not the way you thought the Marne should look... Nothing in war the way you thought it would be... Two French officers, opposite her, talking... 'Marvellous what these Americans had done at Mont-Sec! Soldiers had gone across barbed wire as though it were mere grass... But they were young, these Americans, mere boys! And they were brave! And enfin, there were many of them, and they were coming fast now...' Anne made her way back through the evil-smelling corridors of the French train. Outside closed doors, Frenchmen waited, lined up... She walked past quickly, peering into carriages trying to find her own place. At last, there was her bag... A young American officer, sitting opposite. Hadn't noticed him, before she went to breakfast. Hoped he wouldn't talk, at least till lunch time. Sleepy... She sat down, put her head back, closed her eyelids. A flat wheel, going ker-plunk, ker-plunk below her...

...

Anne got up, went out into the corridor, stood, leaning over. Looking at the narrow field between the river and the railway... Little fences ran across it, this way, that way. Here and there among the grass and bushes, little crosses... As if someone had planted crosses

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with the cabbage... She turned and beckoned to the young man in the compartment. Mean, not to show it to him... Before he came that way again, he might be killed... "Come, see the battle-field of Château-Thierry," she said. The young man jumped. He stood next her, leaning on the railing. More little mud fields... More little crosses... A helmet, hanging on a bayonet, among the dead grass... A narrow creek... "I came down on the train with a man who'd fought here. He told me..." The girl was telling him about the battle.

"Gosh, is that the Marne? It's not the way you'd thought it would be," he said. They were stopping at a station marked with big letters DORMANS.

"Nothing in War is the way you thought it would be," said the strange girl...

...

James Eaton sat down again. Horrible to have girls knowing more about the front than you did... Still, how could you help it? This girl would get off soon,– long before they got way up there...

"Where are you going?" she asked. The young man gazed at a sign above her head. 'Taisez-vous, méfiez-vous, les oreilles ennemies vous écoutent.' O, Hell... "Toul," he answered proudly. Wasn't Toul almost all the way to Verdun?

"M-m-m. So am I. At least, that's where I get off."

"But I go farther up than that by truck," the boy said. Better not tell her where he finally went to... Might be a spy, this girl... Anne smiled. So, this boy had never been there... 'Il est dangereux,' said a sign at his elbow, 'de se pencher en dehors.' [1] One of the silly, cautious signs of peace-time... And underneath it, 'Non spogersi.' And next to that, carefully scratched out, 'Nicht hinauselehnen.' Germans, it seemed, were now encouraged to lean out... She closed her eyes. Sleepy...

...

The hut at Avency, out in the mud field... And she was walking, somehow, up the road toward it, with her mess kit... He'd be in the hut... She wanted to see Him... He was going to tell her something... About two shining rails that stretched off, side by side, and seemed to meet somewhere, far off, round a corner... Tell her about the tower, above the woods, where the tracks turned... She must walk faster... Hurry... The only person in the world she really wanted,– His arms, gentle, moving up, out, toward her... 'I'm hungry,' he said, 'will you take lunch...' Anne opened her eyes. Something that she wanted to remember, slipping, slipping... Something precious... Catch it... Something... Someone... The train had stopped, was standing. The young man opposite was asking her if she would take lunch with him.

"Thank you," she said. "I must find that miserable pink ticket."

"Was that what that's for?"

[1] 'It is dangerous to lean out.'

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"Yes. Didn't you get one? They probably won't let you in." The boy, dismayed. Hungry... "Got a package of cigarettes?" said the girl. "Come on. We'll give the Frog that..."

...

Afternoon. The train was growing dark now. There were no lights. Ker-plunk, ker-plunk, ker... plunk, ker... The train stopped. Outside, over the damp fields, darkness settled. Inside, the railroad carriage was dank, cold. Wrapped in her overcoat, Anne shivered in her corner. Cold waiting, in this eerie darkness... Across the 'Il est dangereux' sign the young man leaned out, peering. The French officer had got off at Châlons, with a solemn salute. Anne and the young American were alone. She knew his name now. Knew that he had been at college with her cousin. Knew all about the bombing school at Clermont-Ferrand, and just what squadron he was hoping to go up to. Knew that when he got off at Toul, he had to find his way somehow to a place called Avency-le-Sec... Quite the opposite direction from where she'd be going,– somewhere out toward the lines, the boy thought... "There seems to be a truck train going past in front of us, covered with guns and stuff. Gosh, you know you're getting up there, when you see a truck train..." Anne shivered, sitting there inside her greatcoat.

"Do you?" she said...

...

An hour passed. Anne knew that he had hoped to be a writer, was going up to Harvard, to take English 5 and English 47, learn to write plays... Hoped to write poetry or something, under the inspiration of the front, like Rupert Brooke did... So far, of course, he hadn't seen anything that was inspiring,– only mud and,– and,– stuff at Clermont-Ferrand. Anne coughed. Here, he'd get a blanket for her out of his bag. No reason she should be cold like that. (Why in Hell did they send women up here?) He wrapped the blanket round her. His hands were clumsy. Anne smiled in the darkness. Nice boy...

...

Another hour, colder than the last one. Still the trucks bounced past, through the darkness. James Eaton wondered if you could learn to write plays before you'd really lived much? Felt danger, perhaps, or had your heart broken, or something like that. Would like to write a good play about this war. But hang it, so far he hadn't seen it...

"You've seen the rear," said Anne. "That's seven eighths,–"

"But people just want the one eighth," he said. "Do you think a play could ever give the whole thing?"

"Nothing that people write will ever give the whole thing," her voice was dreamy in the darkness. "They'll write about their own little corner, about the infantry, or about the S.O.S. or about the Air Service. They'll never give you the feeling of people, bouncing

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in and bouncing out of one another's lives. People, thrown together, growing to know each other better in a week than in a year at home. People thrown apart again, forgetting about each other in the next week... People keeping on the surface of things, for fear that if they dive below they may be drowned there... They'll never get that feeling of lives, like bits of confetti, tossed from a high place, fluttering downward, downward... That's what war is. Confetti, fluttering downward..."

"Heavens," said James Eaton...

...

An hour of walking,– of stumbling up and down beside the track and trying to get warm. Stamping your cold feet. Bumping into other passengers. Frenchmen, standing,– Turn your head away and walk on quickly... Hearing trucks, that snorted... The train's little engine, hooting like a screech owl... Scrambling on,– thinking the train would start. Getting off and pounding up and down again, knowing it wouldn't... Hunger... Hunger growing...

...

At last it did go. James Eaton boosted Anne on, after the thing was moving. He held her coat up for her, tucked in her blanket. She fumbled in her bag and found a candle. And he,– he blushed and hesitated about it,– he had a candlestick. He'd bought it in an old shop in Paris,– one did so hanker after something nice to look at in one's billet... He found it,– a brass dragon that crouched and held the candle in its mouth. They lit the candle, set the dragon on the floor between them. And in the wavering, yellow light they watched each other...

...

The station at Toul. Black and rainy. Soldiers and officers bumping into one another in the darkness. James Eaton shouldered Anne's books, his duffle bag, her suit case. He struggled on, behind her. She seemed to know her way here... She smiled and showed her order to the guard by the exit. He didn't look at it but looked at her, and said 'Hello, you're back!' Place full of soldiers... There was a soldier, leaning over from the line at the exit, grabbing the bag she carried. 'Say, Miss Wentworth, the Colonel's shofer waited for you two hours.' The soldier smiling at her, glad to see her... 'No matter, you can come along with me, I got a truck here.' 'Kuntz! Gosh but I'm glad to see you!' she was saying... James Eaton watched the soldier take her arm and steer her gently. So, the fellow thought he owned her, did he? Hell, if you weren't carrying her darn books, you'd turn right round and leave her... Only you didn't want to leave her, damn it... Wanted to follow her... Talk to her more, more... Women ought to be wiped right off the earth in war-time... There she was, turning round now, to say good-bye. This would be the end, then... Never see her,–

"Would you like to ride to Avency with us?" she said. "I'm going

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there, too." James Eaton dumped the box down on the streaming pavement. So, it wasn't to the front at all that he was going... The girl was coming... Well, anyway, he wouldn't have to leave her... Perhaps he'd see her often,– till he got to the real front and began flying... That soldier, boosting her up over the backboard, heaving her box in... 'The boys is lookin' for you,' he was saying...

...

The truck bounded forward, splashing mud behind it. Inside Anne and James Eaton and another lieutenant sat on their bags. Under the flapping canvas side, rain spattered. The other lieutenant had turned up, somehow, from the darkness. He, too, was going to Avency-le-Sec, wherever that was... Off through this mud and darkness... Who were this girl and man that seemed to know each other? Glad he wasn't the driver... Black night like this, and running into the black rain with no lights... James Eaton listened to the mud splash. End of the earth, this must be where they were, going through the black mud... Why, in Heaven's name, did they send women,– Anne leaned her back against the slamming sideboard. The hut,– home, that... Could hardly wait to get there... Her kitchen, with MacLeod and Hopkins,– 'Lookin' for you...' That tiny room of hers... Her stove... Her bed, of shock absorber... Her tin hat, on its nail... She began humming an old tune in the darkness, her voice jiggled by the fierce vibration...

'By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' eastward to the sea...'

James Eaton caught the tune up, his voice a strong, clear tenor:

'There's a Burma girl a-settin', and I know she thinks o' me...'

he sang. Life, not so bad... God, how the song brought back the old, old things that you'd been wanting to remember... The goofer across the truck there, coming in with rather a good bass:

'An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer
China, 'crost the Bay...'

Verse after verse, they sang it...

...

The truck stopped. The girl was jumping out over the tailboard, landing, splash, in a muddy puddle below. The driver, hauling out her bags and talking to her. 'Carberry's gone,' he was saying. 'There's another boob in there now...'

"No. Not really?" she said. "Won't you come in and have something to eat?" she called to the lieutenants. They piled out. They looked round them. Nothing in sight. This girl, and the soldier, must be trying to fool them... Nothing anywhere but rain and blankness, and there was this strange girl plunging off into it... Mud, over your ankles... Coming in between your boots and puttees... Why, this was just a ploughed field... Suddenly the girl, the soldier, disappeared in something. A fence, that hit you. James Eaton felt his way along

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it with his hands. An opening,– he went through. There was the girl, holding a wooden door wide open, before him. He blinked. A place with little lamps of pink and yellow. A big place, warm and smoky,– An open fire of wood, that flickered in a brazier. Around it soldiers, tipping back in chairs, their feet against its railing. Soldiers playing checkers, writing letters. One soldier pounding at an old piano...

Men, rushing up, shaking the girl's hand, taking her coat off, telling her they'd got her supper ready... Telling her to take her hat off 'so she'd look like home'... James Eaton stood, unnoticed, in the shadow. The soldier at the piano was striking up a new tune. The other soldiers shouted, turning, looking across their shoulders at the girl, here. Four hundred voices, yelling... Eight hundred sets of hobnails, stamping the board floor...

"Hail, hail, the gang's all here,"

the whole place shook...

"What the Hell do we care?
What the Hell do we care?
Hail, Hail, the gang's all here,
What the Hell do we care now?"

Silence, after the uproar. And then a quiet laugh.

"It's good to be home," the girl said...

...

MacLeod, standing like a colossus above the French stove, looked down at Anne and the two strange lieutenants sitting, eating. Miss Wentworth laughing, talking, saying how good it was to be back... He'd been afraid she never would come back... That fool Hopkins, settin' next her, gassin'... She needed more cocoa. MacLeod took her cup up quietly and filled it. Who the Hell was this new lieutenant, anyway, that thought he owned her? She looked up. MacLeod's eyes met hers. Christ... "I salvaged a book for you in Paris," she said.

"Did jer?" He came strolling over and sat down, next her. There... She couldn't feel anything else when he was next her... He'd always known that...

"It's Darwin's 'Origin of Species,'" she said...

...

The new Y.M.C.A. man wanted a can of bullied beef for breakfast. Gaskell was his name, he explained, 'old Dad Gaskell,'– of Omahaw. He'd like a little of this corned willy opened up every morning, just fixed up with a little creamed sauce. Sure she'd like it herself, once she'd tried it... He'd be glad to wake her up a little early,– his wife, now, back in Omahaw,–

"Thank you," Anne said, "I believe I'll wake myself up."

...

Cutting bread. It was as if she'd never left the canteen... Paris,

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as far away as ancient Rome was... Except for James Eaton, who stood, cap in hand, here in the kitchen doorway. "I reported for orders this morning," he gasped. Anne smiled. The boy's face flushed, eager... "The Captain asked me if I could play bridge," he went on. "Said the 81st Squadron had sent down for a bomber who could play bridge. I said I couldn't play well enough. Then afterwards I thought I was a fool. Got all fussed up." Anne laughed.

"Good Heavens, didn't they teach you to play bridge at Clermont-Ferrand?" she said.

"We played craps." He blushed. "Sometimes poker. But not enough of that to keep me from getting fleeced by this bunch down town here!" He stopped. This girl wouldn't know anything about that... 'You mean Louise's?' she said. So she did know... "And then he asked me, whether I could play the piano," Eaton went on. "I was so sore with myself for saying that I couldn't play bridge that I said I could play the piano. The Captain got out a list headed 'BOMBERS' and he wrote down 'Eaton, 1st Lt. Piano.' Now, you know, I can't really play the piano,– except just to drum along while I sing. Pick things out, sort of. Gosh! I certainly did want a job with the 97th. Didn't dare to mention it after that 'Piano' business. Suppose the 97th should send down for someone who could play the piano, and they sent me? I'd be dished, then!"

"That's all right, you can sing to them," Anne said. Taking the war too seriously, this boy...

"No, but honest," he said,–

"Go in the other room and sit down, and presently I'll bring you coffee," Anne said...

...

Piling sandwiches. Almost time to stop and go to dinner. MacLeod came in, and stood beside the table, quiet.

"I've something for you." He picked her hand up, gently, and slipped a broad, silver ring over her finger. "I made it for you," he said.

"How beautiful!" She held her hand up, looking. She took the ring off, fingering its silver smoothness. The man's eyes, on her, waiting... A boy's face... Boy, bringing a present to the teacher... No,– a man,– But you mustn't see that... "How did you ever do it?" He showed her, standing a two-franc piece on the table, pounding with his big finger.

"It splays out, and you cut the inside,–" Well, anyway, she'd taken it... Something that he had handled would be near her... Near as he'd ever get to this girl...

"I've got something for you, too." She reached behind a cocoa tin, and pulled out Darwin's 'Origin of Species.'

"That's the one that's goin' to spoil my religion for me, ain't it? Thanks." He tucked the book inside his blouse and walked out.

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Anne held the silver ring between her fingers. A beautiful thing,– smooth and hand-made and simple. Inside the rim, letters... She held it up. "Liberté– Egalité– Fraternité," they said...

...

A row of British officers sat next Anne, smoking black pipes. Before them, on an improvised stage in their mess shack, the Avency show troupe was performing. Behind them British Tommies sat, in solid rows, eyes solemn above big moustaches. Anne laughed,– the jokes were old, but boys were funny... After her, the British officers removed their pipes, and laughed too. Behind the Tommies sat, in silence. The boys on the stage winked at Anne as they went past. The officer next Anne looked at the watch on his wrist. He rose. The others rose, too. 'Going to bomb Essen,' he whispered, 'I say, it was awfully good of you to come with this show...' He shook Anne's hand. 'You can't think how nice it is to see an American lady...' The twelve filed out. Anne sat alone in the front row, with the American lieutenant who ran the show troupe. A roar, like an express train, sounded above the roof, drowning the final chorus.

"There goes the Handley-Page," said the Lieutenant...

...

A black night. It began to rain just as they started back. A mizzling mist beat against Anne's face on the truck's front seat. She peered out into darkness. Could barely see the heads of the two soldiers who lay stretched along the mud guards... Could feel the Lieutenant, tense beside her, his eyes straining. Inside the truck the piano began to jangle. The boys, singing... 'Keep your head down, Fritzie Boy...' The truck lurched. Like being joggled into a bottomless abyss, this... The soldier next her crouched over the wheel, eyes half closed, neck moving this way, that way. '... see a darn thing...' She heard him mutter... The Lieutenant, nervous. His thigh tense against hers... His arm, jerking when the truck lurched. A shrill whistle... Explosions from a motor-cycle engine... The thing grew loud, and louder... Gatling below them, on the roadway, sputtering off ahead into the blackness.

"Dispatch rider," said the driver. "Got to keep over to the right, Lieutenant. There'll be another in a minute. They send two in case one of 'em crashes..." Anne wanted to take hold of something, to cling to it. But there was nothing to take hold of. Would the day ever come when one could ride in automobiles with lights on? 'Damn that piano!' muttered the Lieutenant. 'To the left, Smith, to the left! God!' He was leaning forward, holding to the running board. 'Hey, there!' The man on the right mud guard was shouting... The great truck settled, sideways, sinking, sinking... Tipping, lurching,– that crazy piano inside always jingling... Going to tip over,– well, you could die here, in this muddy blackness... Anne felt the Lieutenant's arm against her, holding... Not much would be left when

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you got underneath that big truck... Anyway, the family wouldn't have to see you... Nobody would ever tell them that part... A jolt. Thank God, the thing had stopped, had touched the bottom, somewhere. Inside, men's voices, singing:

'Keep your head down, Fritzie boy!
Keep your head down, Fritzie boy!'

Piano, still playing...

'Last night by the star shell light
We saw you! We saw you!
You were fixing your barbed wire
When we opened rapid fire,
If you want to see your father,
In the Fatherland,
Keep your head down, Fritzie Boy!'

"Damn that music," said the Lieutenant. "Out, everybody! Out, God damn you..."

...

Anne walked up and down in the black mud of the field while the men shoved. The clumsy truck hung balanced, over the bank's edge, its rear wheels whirling the field's mud out behind. 'Shove on the rear end there, you God da,–' 'Shut up!'

Anne walked off. Better go on, into the field a way, so they could curse all they wanted... Easier to do things in the army if you swore... Part of the bottled-up rage of all this wasted generation, working itself off... She tried to move her toes inside her damp shoes. If only one's feet weren't always cold... Water from furze bushes slapped her ankles. How calm those Britishers had been, going to bomb Essen... Might have been starting out to play a golf match,– A groan. A groan, out here in the darkness? She stumbled forward, bending over, peering. A man's groan... God, what could it be? What was it? A man's boots, lying here, at her feet... One boot turned up, the other with its toes down in the wet grass... A man's leg... A man's body... A man, lying on his stomach, his head twisted strangely, under his shoulders. Leg must have been put on backwards... It looked like a doll's leg, twisted the wrong way... Anne knelt down, pulled his shoulder. If she could turn him over...Wounded soldiers ought to lie on their backs,– beautiful, with pale faces facing Heaven... Another groan... His face was dark, distorted. It dropped down, into the wet grass, nose in the mud. She couldn't seem to turn him. He was too heavy... Heavy... Better run back and get the others... She stumbled over something. A motor-cycle, twisted, crushed down. Along the road above her another motor-cycle snorted, sharp explosions sputtering off into the darkness. 'They run two, in case one of 'em,–'

"All together! Now!" A Royal Air Force truck was up there on the road pulling the show truck. Four heavy ropes that tightened... Slowly the clumsy thing lurched forward, upward.

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"Man? Where?" said the Lieutenant. "Are you sure? Can you show us? Sergeant, let's take four men over here with Miss Wentworth..."

"I say!" said a British officer somewhere in the darkness, "they've got a lady with them!"

...

The truck stopped in the dark in front of the camp hospital. Three o'clock in the morning... It didn't matter... Anne sat, cold, shivering on the front seat. Couldn't bear to get out and watch them pull the man out... The boys hadn't played the piano on the way back. One of the soldiers guided her by the elbow through the mud field. He was thanking her for going with them... Saying he was sorry that it had ended by finding that guy... The guy'd be all right, he added, cheery... "When we took him out, he wasn't groanin' no more."

"Wasn't he?" Anne said...

...

Bread... Jam... Cocoa... Cocoa... Jam... Bread... Washing dirty cups... Slicing bread... Whacking open tin cans... Scrubbing... Making change... Coughing... Just the least little pain behind one's ear when one coughed... Talking to someone... Smiling... Always smiling,– the 'canteen grin,' Evelyn Tollet called it... More cocoa... More bread... More smiles... The war went on...

...

"Can I get coffee here?" An officer with a pale face stood in the kitchen door, dishevelled-looking, his hair unbrushed under his overseas cap. His mouth twitching... The way mouths used to twitch long ago in school,– little boys, trying not to cry...

"Sure. Come in. Sit down. In just a minute,–" The man paced up and down the kitchen, hands behind him. He wouldn't take the chair that Anne pulled out. Up and down... Up and down... Walking ... Walking... Berthe, rested her spoon against her hip bone, watching. 'Tout-à-fait comme un lion en cage,' she said...

"I won't go back," said the man, suddenly. "My God! I won't! I won't! That's all there is to it! I won't! They can shoot me,– but anyway, I'm done." Anne turned from the shelf, a cup poised in her hand. The man was tearing open the collar of his blouse, as though it choked him. Passing white trembling fingers through his dark hair. His overseas cap tumbled backward to the floor. He kicked it as he went by. 'Fou!' Berthe waved her spoon toward him. 'Fou, le pauvre garçon!'

"They can shoot me," he said, "they can't make me go back up... See my friends burn one after another. God!"

"Come and have some coffee," Anne said. She set a chair beside her kitchen table. He needed someone,– His hand shook as he raised the coffee. He gulped it, set the cup down. His eyes met hers. Agony behind those eyes... A look, evasive, terror-stricken,– and

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shame at feeling terror... You learned to read men's eyes... Anne went on spreading marmalade on the bread. He would begin presently, when he had eaten...

"I can't fly any more," he said suddenly. "I'm no good." He laid his bread down. His fingers trembling... He hated trembling fingers... Again he was up, and walking up and down, bumping into cracker boxes, bumping into Berthe... Anne sighed. How could you help them if you couldn't make them eat first? "The higher-ups know I've lost my nerve," the man said. "They're giving me a week's leave. This last week, every time I've been up I was perfectly certain I'd be killed. You wouldn't mind getting killed so much, but God, this burning,–" He drew a long, jerking breath. The unruly lips were pressed together now, chin puckered, tears, trickling down the man's cheeks... Dropping on his pilot's wings of silver...

"I know," said Anne, "I know..."

"Seventeen of my friends I've seen come down in flames," he turned his face away, looked out the window. "Seventeen in two months. After a while you get so you can't stand it." He dropped into the chair, arms dangling, heels forward. Then, convulsive, he jerked one hand up, raised his cup of coffee. It slopped as he drank it. He passed his sleeve across his face. This girl said she knew. She couldn't know... How you played poker with a man one evening, heard him laugh, and then next morning you saw his plane go smoking, flaming down, down, toward that hard, purple earth below the clouds there... To see a little speck leap out and drop, drop, whirling, spinning, and know it was,– God, this girl couldn't see that... She'd think he was a bloody coward, that's all... She'd see him, crying... Can't help it... Someone would have to hear it... Easier to talk to a decent girl than,– 'What kind of plane do you use?' she was saying... Why should she care? "Breguets, at first," he answered. "French ones, with unprotected gas tanks. One bullet through your tank, and then it's all up. No parachutes, of course,– could have saved half the boys if they'd had parachutes. The Germans have 'em. But we spend thousands of dollars training pilots, and then we let 'em burn up. Now we've got Flaming Coffins,– those famous D.H. 4's with Liberty motors. Worse than the others,– you can't see out of 'em. Can't tell where you're going. But it isn't that,–" The man sat, staring.

"I know," said Anne, "it's your nerve,– it's,–"

"You're king of the world when you first start flying," the man said. "Cock-sure you can do anything,– and while you feel that way, you can. Then you start cracking. God! Nothing's worse than being afraid! You're scared of being scared. It makes you clumsy. You know that sooner or later, it'll be your turn. You get crazier and crazier each day, because the sooner it's over with, the better."

"Go to the Mediterranean," said Anne, "sit in the sun. You'll forget,–"

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"You can't forget," he said. "I dream about it. I see those Fokkers, diving on my tail,– hear phosphorus bullets screaming past me, feel myself falling, falling. Wake up, all of a sweat. No,–" He got up,– "They can court-martial me,– do anything they want. I won't go back." He strode toward the doorway. Something in that girl's face that made you want to burst out like a baby... Put your head right down in her lap and bellow... Your damned hat, where was it? Get out of here, quick, before you go to pieces... There, she had your hat, was brushing it off... 'I believe you will come back,' she was saying, 'I'll be looking for you in ten days...' Holding her hand out... Curse his hand,– the damned thing trembling as if he had the palsy... Wanted to touch hers... Long time since he'd touched a decent woman... He took Anne's hand, and gripped it, and dropped it, suddenly, as though it burned him. His whole jaw trembled. He turned and strode out through the open doorway...

"I'll have some coffee ready when you come back," she called. It was as though a thunder storm had left the kitchen...

'Il est émotionné,' said Berthe, 'le pauvre garçon!'

...

"Why don't you go to the Officers' Mess for lunch?" Anne asked James Eaton. He sat in the back kitchen, drinking cocoa, eating a 'goldfish' sandwich. He had done this every day for more than a week now,– came strolling in out of the woods at lunch time...

"'Fraid they'll see me, and give me a job round here," he said. "I'm sticking round the woods till I hear the 97th has sent down for someone." Anne laughed.

"You don't get bored in the woods?"

"Sure. But it's not so bad as sitting round that Casual Officers' Mess there. That makes you nervous. There's a fellow who's been sitting round there six weeks, waiting to be court-martialled. He's got a dog. He never talks to anyone now, except that dog. Come back,–" There,– she'd gone out... Why in Hell must she always be talking to those soldiers? Even if he should stay here six weeks, he'd never see her except surrounded by a hundred soldiers...

"I can't. I'm busy," Anne said.

...

"Telephone, Miss Wentworth." Dad Gaskell ran his head into the kitchen. "Headquarters, down to Neufchâteau, they want you." Goin' to move this girl outa here, likely... Dad Gaskell hoped so. Headstrong, this one... One o' the worst he'd seen yet... Obstinate... You couldn't get round her, neither... Makin' a fuss about payin' fer things that you took outa the storeroom... Puttin' three francs in, each time she eat a box of sardines... Talkin' about it... She done that so's he'd think he oughta pay for them cans of pineapple he'd eat. Too bad if he didn't know how to run his own canteen... She'd see who was boss here! She pushed past him. 'Sorry I can't get you the

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order to go to Paris for ten days,–' Mrs. Phillips voice, like a mosquito,– 'the French won't...'

"Oh, yes," said Anne. The order for her to go to Paris? Why, she'd been,– she'd got back,– "Oh, never mind," she said, "I won't go!"

...

"They say at Orly that the war is over." Lieutenant Sheldon drew his chair in next Anne's at mess. The officers laughed all up and down the table. They didn't even laugh as if it were a good joke... 'J'a ask 'em how many glasses of champagne they'd just had?' 'Been up all night, I betcher.'

"No, honest," protested little Sheldon. "I call 'em up every day," he explained to Anne. "Find out about the weather,– how many planes they're going to send, all that. Today they wouldn't talk about the weather. Kept shouting something about Wilson's terms, being accepted." 'Oh shucks!' said Fitzpatrick. 'We'll be here twelve years...' 'Say, Rickenbacker got three more Huns.' Everyone listened. This was real stuff... 'A balloon over Dun-sur-Meuse and two Fokkers over Cléry-le-Petit: That makes him nineteen,–' 'Frank Luke's the boy for balloons. Gosh, fourteen victories in eight days.' Anne drank her coffee, gazing at the table. The war, over? It couldn't,– it was a joke played by somebody in Paris... Peace,– a fantastic vision,– 'Two more of the Richthofen outfit jumped out of Fokkers over Dun yesterday. Their parachutes opened up all right,–' 'Now what I can't see is, why our army doesn't...' This talk was all of war. There couldn't be peace...

...

Eaton sat in the kitchen, elbow on the table, watching Berthe cut bread, when Anne got back. "I got my orders," he said. "The 97th wants someone who can play the piano,–" His voice was gloomy...

"The 97th? Fine! You'll be off today, then?" She tied her apron, rolled her sleeves up. Be nice not to have him always sitting round the kitchen... Staring at you...

"Yes," he watched her dipping golden marmalade out of a tin pail. Wondered how much the French woman would understand what he said... Something he must say to her before he left here,– damn it, here came that big sergeant... And the talkative fellow out of the Post Office... Filling the whole kitchen up, as if they owned it... And she was talking to them, laughing, kidding... She was glad that they had come, and stopped his,– Eaton went out the kitchen door, and banged it...

...

Anne woke up. Pain in her ears... Been trying not to feel it all night... Just a cold,– everybody had it... Last night the whole hut had been a chorus of coughs... Mustn't get sick... Dad Gaskell threw his boots against the board partition. Afraid that girl'd never

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git out and git his breakfast... Anne heard him clear his throat, spit into his pail...

...

New prisoners came that day to sweep the hut out. Rosy, pink faces, blue eyes, wearing strange, round caps without a vizor. They brought their heels together, their hands up, stiffly,– stood, like wooden soldiers... Gazing at Anne, their faces deliberately blank, without expression... Why, these were children... 'Germans,' explained the guard. 'We got four hundred of 'em in a stockade down town.'

"Guten Morgen!" Anne smiled. The wooden soldiers melted. Sudden smiles lit their faces... Boys, delighted... "Guten Morgen, Gnädiges Fräulein!" They stood, grinning... Bowing... Listening to her, eager,– Ach, yes to clean a floor, they understood that! They got on their knees, and scrubbed,– scrubbed, without stopping. The guard leaned on his rifle, watching, grinning. The floor had never been so clean, the boards shone, yellow. Anne came with sandwiches and cups of cocoa. The guard grabbed his. The prisoners stood, looking.

"Für Sie," said Anne. "Für Ihnen,–" How did you say it?

"A-a-ach!" Their faces flushed. They put hesitating hands out, watching her face. For them? Really for them? White bread? Cocoa? Gott im Himmel! "Danke schön, mein Fräulein!" They looked at her, shyly, from under blond brows. "*Sehr* gut!" She watched them, eating. Small boys, with a treat... Might be Americans, except for their caps... "The Fräulein reminds me of my sister in Deutschland," said the youngest...

"Do I?" Anne said...

...

"Will you conduct a funeral?" The Doctor stood behind Anne, his trench coat dripping. 'What, me?' She looked at the pleasant, pink face, that was streaked with rain. "Two boys died yesterday of flu down at the camp hospital. There are no chaplains in the Air Service, and I don't know how to get these fellers buried. You're an uplifter, I thought perhaps you,–"

"The Y.M.C.A. man can do it. I'll bring him," said Anne.

...

"But I ain't a minister, any more than you are," Dad Gaskell complained. "I didn't come out here to,–"

"That's what war is, isn't it, Mr. Gaskell?" Anne said, "doing something you didn't expect to. I'm sure nobody could read the service better,–" Dad Gaskell buttoned up the collar of his blouse, puffed his thick chest out. Marched a couple of times up and down the kitchen...

"Well say!" he said. "I'll have a try at it."

...

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They rode out on the front seat of a truck. Rain dampening their knees, stinging their faces... The oak trees on the ridge beyond the road rose up and lost themselves in trailing white mist. On Anne's right sat Gaskell, his face squinched up, eyes half closed. The beating rain, running down the wrinkles... On her left the soldier at the wheel lowered his head against the storm, his eyes intent on the truck ahead, its wheels flinging mud back... Behind, a pine box rattled against the bouncing floor boards... They turned off into a little field. The forward truck stopped moving, wheels whirling, sending up clots of brown mud. A young lieutenant jumped down, signalled to stop. Across the field there, someone had dug two holes and thrown the dirt up in a great pile between them. Into the empty holes, the rain poured...

The soldiers struggled with the heavy box. 'God damn!' breathed one of them, as the thing slipped... Lugging it, they lurched forward, mud sucking their boots. The men slid, clutched at the slippery wood, trod on... After them ploughed Anne and Mr. Gaskell. Behind the hole the soldiers laid the box down. They shook their reddened fingers... Six men with rifles, lined up in the mud, and stood, red faces gleaming... A sergeant gave a sharp command. The rifles clattered. The lieutenant looked at Gaskell, looked at Anne. Anne fumbled in her pocket for a book that she had borrowed from a lieutenant at mess. She handed it to Gaskell, opened at a place where she had put a ribbon. He burrowed for his glasses, put them on, eyes blinking, mouth set, like some ugly toad, gazing upward. Rain pattered on the book's small, thin pages. Gaskell smacked his lips and gave an odd gasp.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life," he began... The soldiers gazed down at the mud that ran from the loose pile into the black hole. The lieutenant gazed down. Gaskell stumbled on, gasping, spluttering over unfamiliar words. Anne gazed at the long box. Mud, staining the white boards... Somewhere were this man's family, his friends... Lump rising in her throat... She swallowed, hard... To die alone, of flu, in a camp hospital... You didn't come to war to do that... To be planted in a wheat field by people who didn't know you, didn't care... Mud, staining the white boards... They lowered the thing somehow, clumsily, with a rope. It slipped and jolted. One end, too far down. His head would be bumped... Or his feet... The young lieutenant giving orders, blinking... The soldiers, red-faced, breathing hard, letting the rope slip through hands, wet, red with cold. The thing splashed when it reached the bottom. Somewhere this man's mother,– Anne swallowed, blinking. She felt for her handkerchief... Her nose,– It was his mother she was weeping for, not for the soldier... She didn't know him. Nobody here did... A sharp command. Rifles, pointing toward the grey sky... Rifles crackling... Crackling again... Again... Silence... The patter of rain... Little Levinson, raising his

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bugle, puffing his cheeks out. Anne closed her eyes. Taps... The sweet familiar music of each night... The last note trailing sadly on the damp air...

The soldiers were getting the other box down off the truck, struggling with it through the mud. This whole thing to do again... Another...

"Say, these pages are all stuck together with the wet." Gaskell was fumbling, next her, with the prayer book, water running down the wrinkles in his flabby, soft cheeks. Anne tried to help, hands red and clumsy with the coldness. She blinked, like Gaskell. Wetness, dripping from their faces to their trench coats... Rain... Or was it tears...

...

Eaton was strolling round the hut when Anne got back. She watched him. He was unhappy, restless... Why didn't he go? Five days had passed now since he got his order. To the 97th, too, the one he wanted. There was that piano business,– it must be that,– afraid to tell them that he didn't really play the piano. He turned and followed Anne into the kitchen. Fitzpatrick and his bunch were in the back room, talking to Berthe, trying to find out why Anne wasn't there. 'Funérailles,' Berthe was saying, 'Funérailles. Compris?' 'Gone to get some Rye,' said Fitzpatrick. Laughter... 'Cheers! Here she is! Goin' to give us tea, Miss Wentworth?'...

"Sure," said Anne. Pleasant to be back, in the blue apron, throwing things round. Nice to be talking, laughing at Fitzpatrick... 'Say, the Colonel, he lined those pilots up, and he ast 'em were they in the U.S. uniform, or were they dressed to go to dancin' school? Told 'em to go and sew up their split coats.' The bunch laughed. Anne laughed. Wonderful, after an afternoon like that, to laugh... Like taking a hot bath...

From behind the stove James Eaton watched her. She stood, there, stirring the cocoa with a wooden spoon, dropping it, to give these halfwits cakes, parrying Fitzpatrick's fool jokes... Nothing serious at all about this girl... The French woman had said she'd gone to a funeral. He'd thought she would come back tired, depressed... Wanting,– wanting,– Well,– ready to put her head down on your shoulder, weep there... Here she was, boisterous, independent... Wittier than Fitzpatrick... Not at all the kind of girl he'd thought her... Still, damn it,– 'Who's got another cigarette?' Fitzpatrick felt his blouse. Nobody had one. The girl's hand went to the pocket of her skirt. So she was that kind... 'I've got some.' She pulled out a softish, oblong thing and threw it on the table. It was a book, of black leather, marked with a gold cross. 'Heavens!' A roar of laughter... 'Try again,' said Fitzpatrick. James Eaton got up, walked out. The girl was laughing... 'That was the wrong pocket...' she was saying...

...

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A brisk wind brought chill weather. The stars were out when Anne walked up to supper. Dark... 'I get a great kick from the,–' An astounding, white light,– a silvery ball, floating between the sky and earth there... Lighting the ridges of the mud field... Lighting the barracks... And down below, on the great field, the hangars... A silvery light that drifted downward, downward... An engine, throbbing... Anne lay down in the cold mud. The frozen surface broke and let the wet in. The flare bomb, just to the left. The throbbing directly overhead. Next thing he dropped must land here... On you... Just lie here, waiting for it to hit you... Damn it, you didn't want to die now... Giving one's life up gladly,– all that,– what rot... No one who is young, and well, dies gladly... That throbbing engine,– why didn't he hurry? Hurry... Life,– a candle, that other people could blow out,– A whistling scream, a bang, that shook the air, that shook the mud around you. Wood, ripping, splintering... Something that landed, plop, in the mud there. Get up... Run... Run where? Lie still, silly... They must have hit something on the field... Wanted to live, that was it... To live... To feel,– everything there was in Life, before you,–

The flare bomb went out, left the whole world dark. How did you put on this blooming gas mask? Better find that out,– If you were still here... God, how you wanted to stay here... To keep on living... To feel your muscles, moving... Spirit,– bah! It was with your body that you felt things, knew things... Who wanted to be a disembodied spirit? Heaven, on earth... On earth... Once, under those stars, you had stood on the brink of,– Another crash. A tearing, ripping... Things dropping in the mud about you, plop, plop... How in Hell were you supposed to keep tin hats on, lying horizontal? Your back stiff, aching... Silly to lie here, face down in a mud field... You might be just where the next one would hit... She got up, flipped the mud off of her trench coat, straightened the tin hat. She walked on. Still alive... And hungry... Awfully hungry...

...

Anne leaned against the counter. She looked out into the smoky hut, where the men sat. They sat, feet up on the rail about the brazier, caps tipped back, coughing... They seldom sang now... From the darkness, over in the corner, little Edwards' white face, gazing at her... Men, coughing... Coughing... By the stove, behind her, MacLeod coughing... Hopkins coughing... Anne coughed. When she coughed now, her ears hurt...

...

"Two of 'em's out there still." Dad Gaskell came back to the kitchen after putting the lamps out. Anne went out into the eerie darkness of the big hut, holding her candle high above her.

"Say, let me stay here?" A hoarse whisper, "Them barracks is so bloomin' cold, nights..." His cough rattled in his chest. She got him

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blankets, made hot lemonade, built up the fire. "Thank you, Ma'am," he muttered. Cheeks flushed, eyes staring, brilliant... Firelight, flickering on a gaunt face... Scarcely a night, now, that she did not do this...

...

Her own room. Everything wet... Dampness that trickled down the walls, oozed through the floor. Her nightgown clammy as it fell about her... The sheets damp, you shivered for a long time... The night air rasping your throat, and making you cough... Would it ever be over, this war?

...

Standing by a long hole in the ground... Next it, on the mud, a box was lying... 'I'll open it,' said Anne, 'there might be someone that I knew inside it.' She raised the lid. But inside lay a candle... They shut the lid and lowered the candle to the dark hole... There was a splash, but when Anne looked, the candle and the box had gone... The hole was empty... 'Quite easy to get another one, Gnädiges Fräulein.' It was the little German prisoner who was talking. Beyond the pile of earth there stood a row of lighted candles... The pink-faced boy climbed up and, standing on his tiptoes, blew a flame out... 'See, it fits nicely in the box,' he said... A man stood next her by the empty hole... Tall, straight, his eyes dark under his deep brows, looking far, far forward... She'd known him all her life,— He took her hand... They floated... Along a railroad track,— two shining lines that stretched away before them... That seemed, somewhere, way off to touch each other... He turned, and held his arms out... At last,— 'Miss Wentworth...'

...

She raised her head up. Someone knocking... 'Miss Wentworth,' he was saying, 'Miss Wentworth!' 'Yes?' 'There are two truck drivers from the front,'— old Gaskell's voice. 'Haven't had anything to eat since morning.' "I'll be there in a minute." Anne pinned a blanket across the window, scratched a match. Clothes... Damp, cold. How you shivered... Wet shoes...

Two soldiers sat in the kitchen, faces, lit by the lamp's faint, flickering yellow. Faces grey with spattered mud... Eyes, glazed and weary. They watched the girl make a fire out of broken boxes. A woman... A woman that talked English... Like the U.S.... Like home... She set down soup before them in steaming, big bowls. 'Thank you, Ma'am...' Anne watched them, eating. Satisfaction, growing... Eyes, less weary...

"We come from the Argone," said the blond one. "Sent us down here to get machine-gun parts,— told us to hurry. We gotta get 'em up there before tomorrow noon time."

"And we come over lots o'—" the sentence broke off. He gazed at the lamp. 'What?' Anne asked. "Dead men, lyin' in the road," said

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the blond one, looking at her, "We didn't have no time to pick 'em up. Couldn't get past 'em." He stopped, eyes on the plate of warmed corn beef, canned beans, bread, marmalade. Ought to say something cheerful to this lady... Hadn't she got up in the middle of the night to feed you? "Say, we've sure got them Germans on the run!" he ate beans.

"I'll tell the world we have!" the other, grinning. "Movin' so quick we can't keep up to 'em,– God knows where the outfit'll be when we get back up." They pushed their chairs back. They stood, looking down at Anne. Say, how could ja tell her,– "Say," said the dark one, "you remind me of my wife..."

"Aw, shut up," said the blond one. He crushed the girl's hand, couldn't say nothin'...

"Good night," she was saying, cheerful, "good luck!"

...

Cutting bread. 'Just a baby's prayer at twi-light,' some soldier wailed, to the tinkling piano in the hut outside... Through the kitchen window, Anne saw James Eaton, strolling across from the woods... Still here,– queer! He came in the kitchen door... 'When lights are lo-o-o-o-o-ow.' "They've signed an armistice with Austria," said James Eaton.

"They have?" Anne held the bread-knife, poised. Could it be true, then, that this war might end? Not now... Not so soon... 'Poor baby's ye-e-e-e-e-ars,–' Damn that song... 'Are filled with te-e-e-e-e-ears...'

"Dope came over the telephone from Chaumont."

"Truly? Do you suppose,–" She laid down the bread-knife, stood gazing out the window. If it should stop... If it could, only, stop... Queer noise, behind her. Eaton... She could feel him, standing very close, making funny noises with his breath. Good Lord! So it was that? And not because he couldn't play the piano, that he had stayed here? 'Her precious little tot... Is Dad's forget-me-not...' That tune... God, if only there wasn't any piano...

"You don't care anything about me!" His mouth, near her ear... His hot breath against her neck... So he was going to make a scene, right here... What idiots men were... Slaves to their bodies... Most of them,– not all... There had been one, who,– And he was the only one you,– 'She climbs the sta-a-a-a-airs...' Got to say something... With Eaton making noises here behind you... Making the whole place tremble with his,– Ugh... If only men could,–

"Nope." She went on cutting bread. 'Quite unawa-a-a-ares, And says her prayers...' Damn that piano...

"God!" Eaton stepped back. Always known this girl was a hard one... Known it ever since that day he saw her toss that prayer book on the table... After a funeral, laughing... And yet, Great God! He wanted,– If only this fool place weren't always full of people... You

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couldn't argue women into this thing... But they fell, once you'd,– 'Levinson!' she was calling, 'Come help me lift this marmite off the stove like a good boy, will you? Easy, now. Now up. Tha-a-at's it,–' The little bugler stood there, beaming. She treated the fellow as if he were a small boy... He acted like a small boy... You had to act like a small boy, it seemed, with women like her... She was turning now and looking at him... Making him ache all over...

"Do you know what I'd do if I were you?" Her voice was very gentle. His mother used to talk, just like that, when he was naughty ... Perhaps, after all, she wasn't a hard one... Made you ache worse, this... 'No,' he stammered. His face hot... Growing hotter... "I'd go up to my squadron today, right off, for fear the war should be over before I got there." She held her hand out. Send him off feeling friendly... 'Just a Baby's Prayer at Twi-i-i-light.....' Damn that piano... 'For her Daddy over there...' Her hand, still out... He stood. Didn't dare to touch her... Wanted,– God! Say something, make your damn mouth move... No sound... Didn't dare look at her eyes for fear he,– He turned, rushed out. 'Good luck' she was saying... Anne went on, spreading salmon on a sandwich. 'Poor things' she muttered...

"Say, if you was referrin' to these here goldfish sandwiges you're making," Hopkins came in, perched himself on the table, breezy, smiling, "I'll say they are poor things!" Anne laughed.

"You can't always have jam on your bread..."

...

It rained. A squad of German prisoners were digging in the mud field. An American soldier stood guard, his rifle on his shoulder, the bayonet pointing upward at the grey sky. From off his helmet at the front the rain dripped. Splashed to his slicker, off his slicker onto his wet boots. The guard walked up and down, bored. Anne walked by, pulling her feet up, kicking them out in front to throw the clods off. The guard grinned at her. 'Sunny France!' he said. Anne laughed. The prisoners straightened up. Himmel... A woman, out here... Pink faces, under round caps with buttons in front. Eyes,– determined to show nothing. They watched the woman walk past. 'Hey there!' the guard called, and they went on working...

From her kitchen window, Anne looked out at the prisoners as she sliced bread. Men, bending, digging ditches that they did not want to dig... Forced to dig ditches... The guard, who did not want to guard them, standing. The rain dripping, dripping... One of the men straightened up slowly, and walked toward a latrine at the wood's edge. 'Halt!' the guard called. The German plodded forward, slowly, across the wet field. 'Halt!' A sharp report. The walking man fell forward. Lay in the mud, face down. One of his feet jerked. 'Kamerad!' The other prisoners dropped their shovels, held their hands up. In the mud the jerking leg lay still now... Anne closed her

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eyes. Sickness... Your stomach... Rising... Don't let it. You had to go on. She looked down at the bread, set her blade near the loaf's edge...

...

Evening. Pitch dark. Anne, going to mess, counted hummocks in the mud field. One, two... Sunday evening,– that was the trouble... Everyone always had cafard on Sunday... Work slackened just enough to let you think,– and when you got thinking,– The soldiers had asked her if she'd have church that evening... No chaplains in the Air Service,– that made it awkward... Eight, nine... Why was it men always wanted what they could not have? She'd telephoned the Y. to send a parson... Hoped he'd get here... Fifteen, sixteen, cough, cough,– if only it didn't hurt so when you coughed... Cold, settling in your damn ears... Dangerous,– ears... Ought to see a doctor... Seventeen, eighteen,– Damn this mud... Slipping, sliding. No doctor here that knew what an ear was... Twenty-one, twenty-two. Stop, and kick the mud off... Black ahead... God, you got tired. Carrying this helmet, and this gas mask, and all this mud on your feet. Cough. Silly to fuss, everyone else had just as bad a cold as you did. They didn't complain... Infirmary so full now that no one else could go there... Twenty-nine, thirty... Two more hummocks, then grope for the path... Stagger up hill... Tin hat and gas mask, heavy... Feel the barrack wall, and find the damn door...

Candle light made you blink after that inky darkness. Candles, stuck in the necks of beer bottles, down the long, narrow table... Candles, lighting the weather-beaten faces of young men, bending over, eating... Surely it was a lifetime that she'd been here... Their faces grim, distant,– the cafard here, too... Anne sat down.

'The Kaiser's fled. That came over the wire from G.H.Q.' 'It won't make any difference. They'll go on fighting!' 'They say the German delegates have met Foch,– gone back to Germany to consider terms.' 'They said that two weeks ago!' 'Oh, the damn war'll go on. Don't worry!' 'Our boys haven't got anywhere near to Berlin...' They went on eating. Sunday...

...

The canteen was crowded when Anne got back. "Goin' to have church?" "Yes," said Anne. Seven times she'd telephoned about a minister. At Y. Headquarters they had said they'd do their best, God helping... They added that the night was a dark one... An hour passed. The soldiers began getting up, strolling to the door, going out into the darkness. 'This God damn Y.!' they muttered...

...

"Guess he ain't comin', it's awful thick outside," MacLeod said.

"Mebbe the guy's fell off the road," said Hopkins. Anne stirred the soup. She'd got to pull this thing off... Dispel the cafard...

"We'll do it ourselves," she said. "I'll read, and you'll,–" The

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grating of a truck outside. Thank God. She walked out of the kitchen. An elderly, grey-haired man came round the screen before the main door. He stopped and put his hand up to his forehead, palm out, staring. It was as if she'd struck him...

"My God!" said the clergyman. "A woman? Up here?"

"Won't you have some hot soup?" Anne said, cheerful...

...

She fed him, listened to him tell how he had been frightened on that long ride through the darkness. Never ridden before at night without lights... Wasn't going to talk about these rumors of the war ending, he said. The chances of its doing so were too small... No chance at all, Anne thought. The war wouldn't,— She sat down in the front row, serious, devout before the soldiers. Her head bent,— Hypocrite... Deceiving these men into thinking you were,— 'Father, bring us courage,' the minister was saying. 'Help us...' Nobody could bring you courage... You had to have it... You had to help yourself... No one would help you... Presently the damp air was filled with sound. Sound that throbbed upward, toward the slanting roof. Got caught there... Made the whole place shake... Men's voices, hundreds of them... A pent-up spirit, that never showed itself except when they sang...

"When the ro-o-o-oll is called up yonder,
When the ro-o-o-oll is called up yonder,
When the ro-o-o-oll is called up yonder,
When the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there..."

Anne found herself rocking in her seat...

...

At last, they were gone. The place was empty. Disordered, black, as usual. The minister had been fed again, and sent on his way. Ministers, no different from all men... Spirits that went up, as the food went down... Anne took up a pile of letters Hopkins had brought, — her lost mail, at last... She picked up the lamp and carried it, a little spot of pinkish light, across the gloom... The passageway... Mice, scuttling... Her room... The door shut...

A letter from Rosalind. She was to marry Randolph the next day, start with him for Mentone. To get him away from hospitals, the doctors said, might help him... His nerves, all cracked up... A letter from Jerry Suydam. Why, Jerry'd got out of the damned Y. Jerry had enlisted, in the Foreign Legion... 'A little blue uniform,— faded, dirty... Lousy...' Good old Jerry... A letter from her mother, in the other world. Proud over the American victory at Saint-Mihiel. Americans had proved still further what they could do, she said. All that long training Geoffrey had gone through,— this new method of fighting, had not been for nothing. How much more they knew about the military part of war at home... Another letter, in a strange, scrawly hand. 'R. L. Something, Chaplain,' it said... Why should a

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chaplain write her? There was another envelope inside. A thin sheet of paper fell away and left it.

His handwriting. She knew it, even though she had never seen it. Her name, written in clear, fine letters. Writing that was perfectly controlled, a practised hand,– yet with a dash about it... Serious, beautiful writing,– an artist made these letters... She saw the man's face as he sat there on the hill beside her, his clear-cut profile facing out toward the valley. His eyes, dark under deep brows... His fingers, round his pipe's bowl... She tore the flap of the square, yellow envelope. Something was going to happen... Something,– that should have happened,– Her name, how beautifully he wrote it... 'Did you feel, as we stood there, under the stars, three nights back? Did you understand? Did you know? Tonight the rain has shut the stars out. The rain is dripping into the dugout where I'm sitting. The men are sitting, silent. They know that before the dawn we're going to get out, into the mud and wires. Time closes in on you. You see that Life's too short to leave any corner of the Truth unspoken. And I left one that evening as we stood there,–' Anne's fingers trembled as she found the next page. So it had been because she was alone, because of what War does to men that he,– She read on. Words, that vibrated with a strange, new beauty... Words that opened a door into a new world... That made your breath come in long, strange, gasps. That made your body stiffen. 'Nobody else had ever said it like this... The last, thin page... The beautiful handwriting... So, He understood... So, He knew that she, too,– A warmth, that flooded... So, Life was,– She laid the page down, gazing.

That other letter... Lying there on the damp boards... She bent down, touched it. Something more, going to happen. A door had opened, into a garden filled with sunlight. And now the door was creaking on its hinges. Must concentrate on the scrawly writing in this second letter... Hard to read, after the clarity, the classic beauty of the other... 'September fourteenth,' the unkempt, messy writing. Nearly a month ago, that. Must go on reading... Stop staring at the table. Go on. Doors... Slammed... In war-time... 'The enclosed letter was given me by its author the evening before our attack on Saint-Mihiel, September 12th, with the request that I should forward it to you. There was no man in the company, I may add in the regiment, for whom his comrades felt a deeper admiration and respect than for this soldier. He was indeed the type of a true soldier and a gallant gentleman. Indeed, there are not many men beside whose grave the soldiers of the burial detail stand and weep like children. It was my sad duty, my very great privilege, to conduct the funeral service over this soldier, who fell among the barbed wire on Mount Sec...' The letter... The other letter... Where was it? She must hold it... Hold it... Cling to it... That beautiful, straight writing... All there was left. She slumped down onto the floor beside the low bed.

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The roughness of the blanket scratching her cheek... 'God!' she whispered...

...

Grey dawn. Black finger marks on the boards above her... She lay, staring upward. Must have been staring at those marks through all these hours... Only now, in the greying light, she saw them... Must not think... Must hold on... Keep yourself from thinking... If you thought, you'd go toppling into a black abyss that fell away below you... Long, long ago she'd climbed a tree at Downham, and hung from a high limb by her two hands. She'd looked down, triumphant, at the world between her taut arms. Higher than Geoffrey ... Higher than anybody... And then the branch had broken. She'd felt it crackle, tremble, sink, sink... She had clung there, not daring to move, waiting for it to go down. The muscles of her arms ached, growing weaker, weaker... Knowing that if she let go, the world would hurt her... It was like that now. You must cling and cling there... Nothing to climb up on and afraid to let go... Your spirit aching, aching... Until some day, you'd,— Reveille sounded. Men's feet... Men's voices, swearing... Mess call. Little things that kept you from,—

Mr. Gaskell yawned in the next room, bounced on his cot, yawned again, out loud. The sounds came clearly through the thin boards. 'Oh dear, Oh dear, Oh dear!' said Mr. Gaskell. He said it every morning. Would say it every morning, until the war was,— His boots came clattering against the boards of the partition. He didn't know he didn't have to wake her... That she'd been awake... All night...

She heard him puffing furiously, to make himself feel warm. Brushing his teeth. Spitting in his pail. Spitting in pails... God... How much longer would the Thing last? How much longer could a person bear it? It would go on, whether or not you bore it. Anne sat up. Her head ached. Or was it her ears, throbbing? Her cough jerked at her,— a stabbing pain through her chest. Must get up. Make Gaskell's coffee, cream his damned corned willy. Keep on going,— it didn't matter if things closed in about you... This was War... You had to keep on going... The floor boards frosted, biting your bare feet... Ice tinkling against the white, tin basin as she filled it. Slowly, as though it hurt her, she dipped her sponge in...

...

"Feel sick?" Dad Gaskell looked at Anne across the table. Wonder how you'd go about getting a new girl? This one looked real bad... 'No, only my ears ache...' "Haven't felt very good myself since that day we stood in the mud out there to that funeral,—"

The girl rose suddenly, picked up the dishes, banged them into a tin pan. Gaskell groaned. Queer kind of girls the Y. sent out to work here... Anne watched bits of bullied beef that floated on the

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water in the dish pan. Work to do... Little things, that kept your mind from,– Forty pounds of bread to cut... Two hundred sticky cups to get clean... Keep going...

"Ce qu'il pleut! Oh, la, la! Quel sale temps!" Berthe hung her dripping cape on a hook. "Bonjour, Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle a l'air fatiguée ce matin. Mademoiselle est souffrante?"

"No, I'm all right." Berthe watched her. Bien curieux, that Mademoiselle spoke English to her today... All the life seemed gone from Mademoiselle's voice...

"Not sick," Anne said.

...

Men, in the line, coming toward Anne. Men laughing, joking. 'Who won the war?' they asked her, and she laughed back. Queer, that you could laugh... Kuntz, in the line. He looked up at Anne as he reached out for cocoa. His face had grown suddenly old and haggard. After a second he let his eyes fall.

"Is anything the matter?" Anne said. He nodded. So Life had stepped on him, too... "Come in and tell me."

He sat down at the table in the back kitchen. She offered him cake. He shook his head. "My brother's dead," he said. "Killed up at Vigneulles. I got a letter last night." He looked across at her. Sad eyes, she had... Funny, he'd never noticed it before... Enough tears behind 'em to weep for everyone was hurt in this whole, God damn war...

"I know," she said. "I know."

Silence. Her lips, trembling... She shook her head. Then she got up, and went back to the counter. Kuntz rushed past her, out through the kitchen door, and slammed it...

...

Anne pushed sandwiches, made change. No matter what happened, everyone would eat... 'There ain't no more war.' A soldier looked across at her, shoving his money. Sly twinkle in the man's eye... He must be fooling... 'The Hell there ain't!' said someone. 'Aw, quit yer kiddin'!' the next one grabbed his sandwich, walked off. War had grown to be the thing of every day, now. If war should stop, all this activity of theirs would,– 'That's right, Miss Wentworth.' Little Levinson, the bugler, grinning: 'The Cap'n lined us up just now, and told us. Said they stopped firin' today at eleven.' 'Them pilots over to 94 Squadron cert'nly was under that impression,' Rogers, the truck driver, 'they was all piled up on top of each other in the mud outside their hangar.' 'Aw, say, Boy! This war ain't over!' Jenkins, a big mechanic talking. 'That's all a fake! You're outa luck if you think,–' 'Well, what I want to know is, when are we goin' home?' shouted the next one...

Sergeant MacLeod stood wiping his boots on the burlap in the kitchen doorway. The Girl looked sick. Who had been hurting Her?

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Why, she looked,– Hell, he'd kill anyone that,– She turned toward him. She always done that,– always knowed he was there before she seen him... Like to pick her up in his arms, carry her outa here... Take her somewheres where she'd be safe and warm... Somewhere in a real home... 'Is the war over, Sergeant?' she was askin'. She wanted to know,– she'd go away soon's the war was over,– Anne looked up at the brown face. So, he loved her, too... It didn't matter... Nothing mattered...

He sat down by the stove and put his feet up. If she knowed, she'd go, and then,– The damn war *was* done,– 'We got to keep 'em working, Sergeant, just the same,' the Captain had said, 'it's going to be a tough job to keep 'em working.' Be a tough job all right... And with the Girl gone,– Her eyes, looking at him, asking...

"I don't know," he said. Christ... 'Is anything the matter?' she was saying... The matter... God... She must see,– No use to try to hide anything from women,– they saw through you... He took a stick of wood and rammed it in the fire.

"Nope," he said...

...

Anne walked along the straight road to the westward. She must find out whether the war was over. Nobody seemed really to believe it. After mess, they had all gone back to their work. The noises of the camp were all about her, donkey engines chugging, trucks snorting, airplanes soaring, singing. But from the hilltop yonder, away from the noises of the camp, you could hear the big guns. She would go up, and listen. Toward her trudged a French peasant, leading a cow. His wooden shoes going clop, clop on the hard road. Narrow shoulders bent forward under the blue smock, tugging against the rope. Bleary, blue eyes looked up at Anne from among a thousand wrinkles.

"B'jour, Madame!" He touched the vizor of his black cap.

"La guerre est finie?" Anne asked.

"On le dit!" The old man shrugged his shoulders. "C'est c'qu'on dit! Mais," he tossed his palms up, "c'est pas possible!" He trudged on, mumbling. The cow followed, slowly. "Pas possible, ça!"

On the hill, shining drops fell from the oak twigs. The smell of dead leaves... There was a clear, blue look about the air now, heavy clouds, rising... Anne stood still looking out toward the northeast. The noises of the camp were little, far away, below her. She stood there, silent, waiting. The guns... The guns, that had become a part of life, now... The noise, that was there, behind the nearer noises of the daytime... That filled the night's dark... She held her breath, and listened.

The air, still. No sound, but the drip, drip, dripping from the oak trees...

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She hurried back. She packed a nightgown and a toothbrush in her 'musette bag.' She wriggled through the strap, pulled it down over the shoulder of her trench coat. Going... Going somewhere... 'If Headquarters calls up, tell 'em I've gone to a hospital,' she said to Mr. Gaskell, 'my ears...' She walked along the road toward the French town. The work about the great camp was going on today, the same as ever. They said the war was over... Got to move, go somewhere... Two pilots came walking up the road toward the canteen... Colby and Sheldon,– they came to tea often, these two. They stopped in the road, smiling. So, the Y.M.C.A. girl was going A.W.O.L.,– they wouldn't get tea... No matter, the war was over... They beamed at her.

"We're going to live!" said Colby.

"Live to old age! Think of it!" said the other. "God!" They grinned. Anne held her hand out.

"I'm glad," she said...

...

A truck came bounding toward her on the highroad. She held her hand up. The truck stopped. 'Want a ride?' A soldier held a hand out, pulled her up to the high seat, beside the driver. She settled down between them. The gears, grating. 'They say the war is over,' said the driver. The truck snorted onward. Out of the west, the gold sun touched their faces.

"Well, anyway," said the soldier, "it's goin' to clear off..."

...

Another town, shuttered, gleaming, ghostly, in the moonlight. White houses,– with their eyes closed... The engine coughed, stalled. The truck stopped and the soldiers got down and tinkered with the spark plugs. It was cold. "I'll walk, till you're ready," Anne said. As she left them they swore at the spark plugs... The square tower of a church cast a dark shadow at the street's end. Before it a statue of Joan of Arc stood, in wasp-waisted armor and a full skirt. Suddenly, from the dark tower above her, bells pealed. No human light in any window, yet these clear bells, ringing, ringing...

The broad road over which they had come stretched back, among the eerie fields, a white, smooth ribbon. Up it,– Anne stopped, holding her breath. Headlights... Great, blaring things, that jolted, pointing now up, now down, growing bright, brighter... There had used to be a life where one used headlights. But for years now one had not seen them. Anne blinked. The blaring lights were shining on her, turning. The car slowed down and took the corner into the town street. A low-hung, grey car, with its top back... French... An army car, full of French officers, the gold braid on their caps catching the moonlight. So, the war *was* over... Over... She believed it at last...

...

The truck lurched round a corner. "Ye-a-a-a-ay!" yelled the soldiers. A thousand lights twinkled in the purple shadow of the valley.

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"Ye-a-a-a-ay!" Anne shouted with them. The dark world, lighted, at last... The truck bounded down the grade into the purple bowl of twinkling lights. Lights, that meant safety, comfort... Lights, that meant Peace... "The damned war's over, I'll tell the world. Say, ain't it?" said the driver.

"I guess it is," said Anne.

...

The street was filled with people, laughing, talking. No rooms at the hotel. Anne had not thought of that. It did not matter... The war was over... Nothing really mattered... A mad procession, swaying under lanterns, poilus and doughboys, arm in arm, skipping, surged toward her, singing...

'La Madelon pour nous n'est pas sévère,—'

A Red Cross nurse clutched Anne's arm, drew her into the lurching column.

'Quand on lui prend la taille ou le menton,
Elle rit, 'c'est tout l'mal qu'elle sait faire,
Madelon, Madelon, Madelon!'

Lilting, lurching, they danced on, clinging to one another. Across the street and back, across and back... A poilu threw his arm around Anne's shoulder.

"Allons, allons, chérie!" he shouted. "La guerre est finie!" Anne laughed. What did it matter?

...

Crowds in the Place Jeanne d'Arc. The procession, losing itself among them... The gentle light of candles, falling on faces... Every window of the old square standing ajar, and in each open window a row of lighted candles... Their flames yellow, wavering... From behind the rows of candles, people's faces, pink in the soft light, smiling... Looking out on the sea of moving faces... An American negro climbed to a chair before a doorway. 'Ma frien's,' he waved his arm toward the faces. 'We done come ober here to fight de Germans. An' we goin' home victo-o-orious...' A French woman, standing next Anne with her little girl, applauded. The others took it up. Hundreds of hands, clapping...

"Il est magnifique!" said the woman.

American soldiers climbing to the pedestal of the little Jeanne d'Arc in the square, covering her with American and French flags. 'Comme c'est joli! Comme c'est ravissant!' The French, applauding... A French officer and an American colonel, helping a French girl up onto the pedestal of Joan of Arc. Again, the people, laughing... An Italian band, playing the 'Marseillaise' before the statue. The French girl sang. The crowd sang. Anne sang.

'Allons, enfants de la patrie,'

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The old, old words, that one had learned in school...

'Le jour de gloire est arrivé!
Contre nous de la tyrannie
L'étendard sanglant est levé,
L'étendard sanglant est levé!'

Heavens, how blood-thirsty it was...

'Entendez-vous dans les campagnes
Mugir ces féroces soldats?
Ils viennent jusque dans nos bras
Egorger nos fils, nos compagnes...'

One had never known what it meant in school... The French shouting:

'Aux armes, citoyens! formez vos bataillons!
Marchons! Marchons!
Qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons!'

Silence... 'Ye-a-a-ay!' shouted the American soldiers. The band again... Playing 'The Star-Spangled Banner'... The Americans humming... Nobody knew the words. No one could reach the high note. They played 'God Save the King.' 'My country, 'tis of Thee,' yelled the Americans. The square was filled with it. 'Grea-ate God our King...' The American Colonel making a speech... The crowd, talking, moving in the wavering light of candles... An American soldier, in the crowd, took Anne's arm, gently.

"No place for a girl to be out alone in," he said. Behind them came a twirling, swirling mob, linking arms, skipping... A snake dance... 'Madelon, Madelon, Madelon!' Voices, in rising cadence, as they surged past. The soldier steered Anne to a doorway.

"Say, these birds certainly is havin' a good time," he said.

"Mademoiselle va aussi s'amuser?" It was a French woman, standing in the open door, arms crossed, a pale, white face...

"Oui," said Anne. "Et vous, Madame?"

"Ah," the woman shook her head. "Pour moi, I have lost my three sons in the war. One does not feel gay. Mais enfin, la guerre est finie! France is saved!" Anne and her soldier were swept on.

"We must find the Y.," she said. "You know the way?" He knew. They pushed their way among a crowd of people. A tightly packed crowd stood round a circle watching something. American soldiers, dancing the turkey trot on the moonlit pavement... On the circle's edge, the Italian band squawking out music...

"Come on, let's dance across it." The soldier put his arm round Anne. They moved and swayed across the circle in the moonlight, thudding against the heavy bodies of the soldiers. "Go quickly," said Anne. It was a frenzied dancing. The other men, dropping one another, coming toward her... Touching her shoulders, her waist... Fifteen of them... Heavens... 'Hey, there!' they said. They grabbed her soldier by the shoulders. She ducked away from him, made off

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among the watchers. She fled on, through the crowd. 'Say, Y!' she heard the soldiers calling... 'Come back!'

...

The Y.M.C.A. hut was huge and darkened. The girls had gone home, the Y.M.C.A. man told her. Yes, she could sleep on the wooden bench, there, if she wanted. There was a division just pulled in from the Argonne, camping round here,– these were men from that,– every billet in the town full... Her feet touched the head of a major who lay on the bench. His feet touched the lieutenant who lay beyond him. The soldier, whose muddy boots touched Anne's head lay still, breathed heavy. The red glow from the stove door touched men's faces, sleeping in chairs, their tin hats tilted forward. A helmet pounded to the floor, rolled. People snorted. Anne rested her dishevelled head on her musette bag. She pulled her coat up round her. Tired... Was it one night, or was it two since she had slept now? There had been a night when,– And she had lain, staring up at black finger marks on boards above her... Her hip bone, sticking into the wooden bench now... Beyond her feet she heard the Major, snoring... Weary, weary... No matter how horrible life was, you sunk... into...

...

The kitchen door opened... Why, there was a garden, out there, filled with sunshine... 'There's somebody waitin' for you out there,' MacLeod said... She knew who it was,– he didn't need to tell her... 'Is anything the matter?' she said to MacLeod as she went past... Something in men's eyes that you could feel in war-time... Too bad, to leave MacLeod behind there... The garden floated a thousand miles below the window... She must jump to it... Somehow she must get there... He would be there, waiting... Waiting... He... Her feet were heavy, frozen to the floor below her. She asked MacLeod to bang them, try to get them unstuck... MacLeod could fix things,– and she must jump... Must... 'I won't...'

...

She opened her eyes. Forgetting something that she wanted to remember... Something precious, escaping... The Major, yelling. His head had hit her feet as he sat up. "I won't!" he shouted, "I won't give that order. My God! Man! That means sure death... That means,–"

"That's all right, Major." The Lieutenant jumped up, stood, bending over the Major. His blouse was open, and his Sam Browne belt hung loose. His hair disordered, rumpled. A man who should wear glasses and whose eyes were bleared without them... His chin, sprouting a new beard. Anne watched him through the dimness. Nothing alluring about men in the night-time... "The war's over," the young man put his hand down on the Major's shoulder. "No need to worry any more, Sir."

"So it is." The Major slid back. His head hit Anne's foot. "War's

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over..." Anne tried to move up. Couldn't... There was a pair of muddy boots at her head... The war, over... Over... Everything... Over...

...

Dawn, yellowing the hut's opaque windows. The soldiers wakening, yawning, picking up their tin hats, going out one by one... The Y. man came in, cheery, to light the stove up. He had slept somewhere, on a real bed... Not with his hip bones sticking into hard boards... Anne sat up, stiffly, reached for her hat and stuffed her hair into it.

"Morning, sister! Have a good night?" asked the Y. man. He watched her walk toward the door...

"Swell," she answered...

...

A company of infantry was camping in the field below the road where Anne walked. The fires in the cook wagons glowed red, sent thin, blue curls of wood smoke up through the still, cold, sunless light of early morning. The soldiers, moving toward the chow line, clanked their mess kits. Their boots left little trails along the hoar frost. Their breaths rose in puffs of white to join the frail mist. The soldiers looked at Anne, up on the road above them. 'Who won the war?' they yelled. Anne waved. She had washed at the Y. mess, and done her hair, and found that food would not be ready for an hour. She drew long breaths of clear, cold air. The mess kits made her hungry.

"Won't you eat with us?" It was a Y.M.C.A. man who asked. A captain, coming down the road with him, smiled at Anne. "Yes, do," he said. "The men would like it. They haven't seen a girl in such a long time!" He handed her his mess kit...

...

"But the war's over," she said to the soldiers as she spooned in rice. They didn't seem to know it... They shook their heads.

"'Tain't possible." They'd just come from the Argonne, they said, for a rest and to get new lieutenants. They were tired, dirty, ragged... Clay mud was plastered on their uniforms, their helmets...

"Aw, we'll go back in," they said...

...

"March with us?" said the Y. man. "We're going to start soon. I fall in behind the band with the pup, here." He patted a small, black cur, who yelped and nipped his puttees. An orderly rode up, jumped off his horse, saluted the young captain, talked for a moment, then mounted, rode off. Steam rose from the horse's damp flank. You could smell warm horse through the crisp air... The sun rose over the hill beyond the town, filling the valley with a golden light. To march would make you hold onto life... Keep moving... Moving... If you stopped,–

"I believe I will march," Anne said.

...

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She shivered in the bright, November air. Trees by the roadside flaunting lingering golden leaves against the blue sky... The black dog yelping, jumping about as the soldiers fell in. Anne drew a long breath. The band crashed forth... The First Connecticut March... Why, it was easy! No effort at all to march, with music... Anne flung her head back, breathing the cold air, facing the sun that shone along the white road. The music pulled you, moved you to the rhythm of the regiment behind you. Yellow trees, by the roadside... Off, between their trunks, the purple valley... A faint haze in the slanting, winter sunshine... Up the long slope ahead, the band still booming, rising, falling... Militarism would never die, as long as bands played. She looked behind her. Men, toiling up the slope... Tired, indifferent ... Carrying heavy packs. Red faces. Muddy boots tramping, toes upturned, heels grinding... Helmets tipped downward, covered with clay mud. The band stopped. You were tired... And the hill was steep... And you must go up... Not so much fun...

'God damn this war!' a man said.

...

"Odette! Denise! Jean!" Little Menguette in the field called shrilly. She gathered her black smock up in her hands and ran toward the white road. It was a long time since soldiers had come to Ivry-le-Petit. And never before had come soldiers dressed in brown... Here came a column of them, up the hill, a column with gay music... The little, black-clad figures stood, mouths open, before the house door.

"C'sont les Américains," la Tante Perrin shouted from the door. She, too, stepped out, splashing her sabots through the puddles of manure juice...

"'Puis, il y a une dame qui marche!" Madame Meulet from the next door shook her head at the Tante Perrin. They watched a girl in a slim, grey uniform, at the column's head. The girl's eyes, far ahead, seemed watching something...

"But she wears a uniform," said the Tante Perrin. "Elle est soldat, elle!"

"An American Jeanne d'Arc," screamed Menguette. She dashed out, running beside the marching girl. And yet,– Menguette panted, – this girl who marched before the soldiers was not a saint... She turned and smiled at her and Jean, and said 'Bonjour!' Saints did not say 'Bonjour...'

...

There came a town where Anne's road left that of the marching soldiers. She must cross the valley to the main road. She stood at the town's edge and waved to them as they marched on. Sad, to hear the band go... It grew fainter, fainter, down the valley... Suddenly Anne was tired. Frightfully tired... Alone... Like to sit down... Like to,– to weep...

"Madame est fatiguée? Madame veut prendre une tasse de café

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avec nous?" A peasant woman's kind face shone from a doorway. Anne turned and dragged herself toward it. Little flickers from the broad hearth touching the copper kettles... There had been copper kettles,– God,– mustn't think of that... The place was dark, cool. Anne sat down on a low stool.

"Merci, Madame," she said...

...

She rode in a peasant's cart, drawn by a yoke of oxen across the valley. The cart had no springs. The old man's cheeks jiggled as he talked to Anne. One son had been killed à côté de Reims, the other at Verdun. 'Mais enfin,' eyes closed, palms open, 'la guerre est finie!'

...

Her feet dragged on the main road. The afternoon was waning. If only a truck would come before it grew dark... One foot after the other ... How easy it had been to walk this morning... That was what militarism did,– made you go forward proudly, reckless... And then,– left you,– 'Have a ride, sister?' It was a Y.M.C.A. truck. Goin' to the hospital, was she? Well, say, he'd take her down there... Lookin' sick, this girl...

...

The truck bounced through the great gate, with the gilded crest above it. It was the hospital where she'd seen Donovan. Why did you crawl back to places you'd been in? Donovan was gone, now... and you,– Yes, it was the aurist that she wanted. She followed the orderly through the shining corridor to his office...

...

"Come back tomorrow," said the dapper Captain. He laid down the long, silver wires with which he had been poking at Anne's ears, unstrapped the shining mirror from his forehead, cheerful. Here was a case that might turn into mastoid...

Anne stood up. Better just hold onto the chair a minute... Didn't know she was going to feel so funny... "I can't. I've come forty miles. I,–" The doctor was reaching for her, holding her elbow... 'Steady,' he was saying, 'steady, sit down...' Blackness...

...

Better... They led her to a ward in a barrack, out across the courtyard. The place was neat and large, and almost empty. The nurse's white uniform was reflected in linoleum, as she sat before a stove and poked the fire. She rose to meet Anne. A bed... A tall, white bed, with clean sheets turned back... Ends of the blankets hanging in slanting lines, the way you used to,– Long ago, that... God, to get into a real bed, with springs... To let yourself go... Let someone take care of you... Not have to worry... About your cough... Or anything ... The nurse was helping her undo her collar... Smooth, clean sheets, cool about one's body... One's head, aching, sunk in the soft, white

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pillow... Hot-water bag, that gently warmed one's cold feet... A stove, that dried the air, and crackled gently... You wouldn't have to stoke it... Thank God... Wouldn't even have to raise one's hand up... Old lady, in the bed across the aisle there, peering at you... Fluffy white hair above a purple jacket... War... No place... for old ladies... It killed... even the young ones...

...

Someone pushing her shoulder... Trying to wake her... Trying to prod her out of the soft, black cloud that wiped the world out... Offering her food... A world where people brought food,– where you didn't have to wade through mud to get it... Nice food in little dishes ... Couldn't stay awake to eat pineapple... The soft, black cloud, closing down around you...

...

She opened her eyes. Night... An orderly, putting wood in a stove ... A row of white beds... Night air, coming through an open window ... A bed with springs, smooth and comfortable, beneath you... If Heaven were... Just a place to sleep in...

...

"Do you want to wash your face?" Cold finger, on her face, that waked her. The night nurse, pushing a basin at her,– The dawn just breaking... A point of honor with night nurses to wake their patients up before the sunrise, Anne remembered... But even water on your face now, couldn't wake you...

"No, I don't want to, but I will." She sank back...

...

'That girl,'– it was the lady with the white hair talking. Why, it was light now... Morning... Or afternoon... Or something... 'That girl has been asleep two days,' the lady, saying... The Black Cloud coming... The lady with the grey hair... Sinking backward... Let yourself... go...

...

The day nurse again. How did she get back so quickly? Telling Anne she must wake up to see the doctor... 'She has no temperature today,' Anne heard the nurse complaining to the doctor, 'there's nothing, really...' 'No matter,' the doctor laughed as they went through the ward door, 'Let her sleep! She's all in...'

...

Dark. This was some meal they'd waked her up for... She couldn't remember whether it was breakfast, or whether it was supper. It didn't matter... She could remember a small boy in the old world. 'Is it night, Mummy, or is it nap?' he used to ask his mother... Geoffrey... He had grown up... He had got,– One mustn't think about that... Turn one's head... The soft, black cloud that came down, and took one,–

...

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"How long have I been here?" It was morning. Sleep, no longer clinging to her like a cobweb...

"Six days," the nurse said.

"Can't I lend you a book?" the old lady opposite looked at her, eager.

"A book? Thanks," said Anne. What did one use books for? No book could ever be as weird as life was... This book a love story, a novel... She laid it down, half open, cover upward, eyes wandering out the window. Bare twigs... In life, too, there had been a romance somewhere... "Will you get my coat?" she asked the nurse.

From the bed opposite, the Red Cross lady watched her groping in the coat pocket. Watched her take out a square envelope of yellow paper... Finger it gently... Pull out sheets of paper covered with fine handwriting... Lie, looking at it... Looking... Looking... She watched the bright-covered novel slide off the girl's knee, fall from the high bed to the floor below her... The girl's lips were trembling... She put the letter underneath her pillow...

...

"You've been at the front?" the lady in the purple sack asked, cheerful, the next morning. She had come out here to work with the sick boys, she said, but she'd been sick herself ever since she got here, – so damp,–

"No. Ten miles back," said Anne. "No one gets near,–"

"But you've been bombed," the nurse said. "How did it feel to be bombed?"

"Wet," said Anne. "The trench you stand in's always full of water."

"Ah, it must have been thrilling!" The elder woman adjusted her glasses to her nose. This strange, young girl didn't seem to be thrilled, – young people never seemed to be romantic nowadays,– She sliced up forty pounds of bread a day, the girl said. Forty pounds? Heavens... That wasn't thrilling... Made three barrels of cocoa, washed four hundred white mugs... Heated the water for it on a small stove... Kept the stove going. The wood pile sometimes floated away,– Washed the cups over... Nothing romantic in that. Sounded like hard work...

"It is," Anne said. She hunched down in the pillows. Couldn't tell people straight from home about war... Not older people,– not ladies... They wouldn't understand you...

"You're a brave girl," the eager lady told her.

"No," said Anne. "You can't help it. You just find you're in for it, you know."

...

A young girl came,– a nurse from the hospital near Toul... A slim, pale creature, who was to be operated on next day. She talked to the ward nurse of horrible sounding things that 'they' might do.

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'Heavens,' murmured the lady in the purple jacket. How could you take ether if you understood all that... 'Heavens...'

...

Morning. The girl in the next bed was pale and nervous. She looked at Anne and closed her teeth, shaking her head. She knew... 'Some letters for you before you go in,' the day nurse, cheerful. She gave the girl the letters. Anne watched the girl in the next bed open one, and read it. She turned it between thin fingers, and laid it on the table. The fingers trembled... The Red Cross lady was asking her how she felt, saying she felt sure the operation would be... The pale girl did not hear her. Her big eyes met Anne's. Her lip trembled...

"Say, it's a great war!" she said...

...

The agony of the sick nurse filled the whole ward. A special nurse bending over the bed, put things in, took things out, came with long, shining needles... Watched... Watched, feeling the girl's pulse... At three o'clock that night she called a doctor. Together, for an hour, they worked over the girl in the next bed, white figures under a bright light. 'You see, she had no strength to start with,' said the doctor, 'done in...'

...

Anne dressed herself. They had told her that today she could get up for a little while, and walk out. For two days she and the Red Cross lady had lain and watched the sick nurse. They had not dared to speak to one another. Anne pulled her coat on. For half an hour she wouldn't have to watch that girl's head, tossing, tossing... Wouldn't hear her, moaning... Cowardly, to want to run from the agony of other people... People shouldn't go to wars who couldn't watch people suffer... She went out, into the gentle, French rain. Legs, wobbling... Home,– thousands of miles off... Home, almost dim now,– so many places clearer... A guard, who grinned, said 'Sunny France!' as she walked by. No strength... The core, the You, that had been there at the middle of your being, quite gone. To go back to that white bed, those cool sheets,– Keep walking! Go on! White bed...

...

Rain pattered on the roof of the snug barrack. It had been pattering like this three days now... At last the girl in the next bed was feeling better. She looked up, suddenly, at Anne and began talking. The Red Cross lady, opposite, lowered the edge of her book and peered across it. Why, they were talking about Hoffman, the great ace... They had both known him,– 'met him at the Air Service Ball,' the nurse was saying,– did they have balls, then? They talked of other aviators in the hospital at Toul,– a man named Diggs who'd died... A man named Upham who had been there, shell-shocked... Strange world, these girls had lived in,– a world of excitement, peopled entirely

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with young men... Romance,– yet to these girls, somehow, quite normal... Perhaps romance was never in the present... 'I used to nurse a bit myself, in Paris,' the Y. girl, saying... Telling how Elsie Janis used to come to the hospital to amuse the soldiers,– how the actress always brought her mother,– The girl stopped suddenly. The Red Cross lady lowered her book. Why, the sick nurse was crying ... Twisting her head back and forth among the pillows, covering her anguished face up with her thin hands. 'What is it?' The Y. girl was up, standing beside the other girl's bed, bending over... 'My mother,' the nurse was gasping, 'my mother's,– dead. It was in that letter I got before they took me into the operating room that morning.' The Red Cross lady watched the Y. girl stand there, saying nothing... Holding the weeping nurse's hand in her hand... How dumb they were, these young ones...

"I know," she said, at last, "I know..."

...

Letters. One from Jerry Suydam, forwarded from Avency by Hopkins. Jerry was certain that in the end, Anne would come to love him. His own love was,– Good Lord... She laid it down. A note from Hopkins: 'Kind friend,– Mac has begun six letters to you and tore them up so here goes. Things is much the same. The boys was hoping you'd be home by Christmas but now this Y. girl's here we ain't hoping too much. She hasn't got your room but the one of the test pilot that got killed. Squadrons from the front is coming in here every day now to go home. Looks as if we'd be the last ones to go home. Hoping this finds you as it leaves me...' Anne laughed.

...

"I've got to go back to Avency," Anne said, "for Christmas."

"You'd better go south," said the doctor.

"Well, anyway," she said, "I've got to get my clothes there..."

Now that she could go back, she didn't want to. Afraid to see those men... Same ones she'd been so fond of,– great, clumsy boys... And yet, not boys... If they'd been really boys, you wouldn't have minded ... But they were men. She'd been alone too long with those men... But she must go back... She'd write the Colonel, ask him to send for her...

...

The Colonel came himself. He squeezed Anne's hand. "God, but we missed you!" he said. The chauffeur, grinning... "We've got a lot of girls up there now," said the Colonel as the Cadillac purred northward. 'Girls?' Anne's brows wrinkled. Girls, at Avency? "Ye-ah. Red Cross girls. All dressed up fit to kill in blue and white things. They sent 'em up day after the Armistice to run the officers' mess. They're makin' it pay,– we don't get half enough to eat now. We're havin' a great big Christmas dance tomorrow."

"If they could only come to help me," said Anne.

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"You've got another Y. girl down there, too. And you'll find work! Squadrons coming in from the front every day now. Those damned, – I mean,– the outfit down in Paris asked me if I had any place to put 'em. I said No. So now they're ordering 'em all in on top of us. Camping 'em on the mud, in pup tents. Fellers that did the real stuff at the front, sleeping on mud, and German prisoners right alongside of 'em in the stockade, in barracks with stoves. We buried six of our men from pneumonia last week. Perhaps in the next war that God damned outfit down in Paris will have got sense!"

"Perhaps," Anne said...

...

MacLeod sat opposite the squadron barrack on an upturned barrel, smoking, watching two soldiers who were shooting craps there. Hadn't been goin' to the Y.M.C.A. none lately... Didn't care about it no more,– place was lonesome... Boys said there was a new girl. Hell, he didn't want no more women round here... They on'y hurt you. On'y made you restless. Get on without 'em. Kuntz came round the corner of the barrack: "Say Mac, your girl's back!" The Sergeant's face flushed. Red, over his ears, among his hair roots. But he sat, immovable, watching his pipe smoke.

"The Hell she is! She ain't a-comin' back," he said.

"Honest to God! She's up there, in the kitchen. Askin' for you, she was."

The Sergeant knocked his pipe out. So, she'd come back, had she? Well,– nothin' to him... He could get on without her... Anyways, he was goin' on his leave tomorrow. He wouldn't care now, if he never seen her... She was,– somehow,– different from any girl he'd ever,– He leaned forward, on his elbows. That was why he,– Christ... He rose, stretching his great frame. Crap-shooters, waitin', lookin' at him... Damn 'em! He walked off, round the corner. No harm jest lookin' at the hut across the field there... Legs,– seemed to be takin' him up there... Knees, God damn 'em, shakin'... Way they done in those air raids last fall... In that trench,– when people shoved him next her... What in Hell had girls to do with men's knees?

...

Anne stood, in her blue apron, in the familiar kitchen. The new girl, at the stove, was making cocoa. There seemed to be nothing for Anne to do here... She leaned against the counter,– her blue oilcloth, – looking across it to the hut. Her brazier... The curtains she had hemmed, hung up, the lamps she had bought. Their gay, pink and yellow shades all gone now. No fire in the brazier. Men sitting round it in chairs, idle, spitting. No one writing letters... No one playing, singing... Something the matter,– A man who had been gazing at her got up. He sauntered across and leaned his elbow opposite to her on the counter. 'Say, when are we goin' home?' he began...

...

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Anne felt the kitchen door open and shut again behind her. MacLeod... You could feel him... Before she turned, she knew that he was in the kitchen. She kept on talking to the man before the counter. 'Well, it will take a long time to get a million men home.' Have to turn, presently, and see him... Have to be perfectly normal, perfectly natural... Horrid to have to pretend to be natural... She turned. How spruced-up he looked,– his uniform all pressed, his brown belt shining... Had lost somehow that hard-working, rough look... His boy's face,– not so much now, like a boy's face... Yet he stood, huge, embarrassed... His eyelids falling...

"Hello." She smiled and held her hand out. He stood, looking at her. God, if she knowed how he'd been thinking... How he'd been dreaming,– He flushed a little. But she didn't... Girls like her didn't know nothing. That was what was beautiful about 'em. Specially this one. This one thought everything in the world was good and all right. There she was, glad to see him,– holding her hand out. He hung back. Didn't want to touch her... He'd dreamed,– His damn hand, trembling, as it went toward hers... Her hand, cool, casual. That made him feel better... She loosened it, and drew it out of his so easy... Didn't know what men were... 'How are things going, Sergeant?' she was asking... They oughtn't let girls,–

"So, so," he sat down. "Pretty hard to keep the fellers workin', now that they know that everything they do's for nothing." He put his feet up on the wood box. Like old times... But it'd never be like it used to... Things you'd kept thinkin' about her,– you couldn't think 'bout nothin else now,– they got between you... 'Yes,' she was sayin', 'object's been taken right out of life, hasn't it, somehow?' His object had been gone three weeks... Like to put your arms,– Steady, boy... Have to set there... Have to answer...

"Yes, Ma'am," he said...

...

"Hello, Miss Wentworth!" Hopkins, cap to one side of his slick hair. Hopkins, smiling, cheerful, pushing the Sergeant's cap down over his nose... "Say, but I'm glad to see you!" Anne shook his hand. Thank God,– he'd keep the conversation merry... "Say, 'd'ju see those guys that walked in today?" Hopkins opened the oven door and put his feet in. "British prisoners, they were. Boy, you never seen such costumes! Say, the Germans jest turned those guys loose and told 'em to walk home. Their skin was all sorta white and pasty, so when you stuck your finger in a guy's arm, it made a hole that stayed there. There was twenty-four of 'em when they started, and only eleven of 'em got this far. One of 'em sat right down outside the Post Office today an' died there,–"

A mess sergeant came in. "Say, will you eat your Christmas chow with us, Miss Wentworth? The orficers has got twelve girls up to their mess,–"

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"You bet I will," said Anne...

...

Evening. MacLeod stood by the kitchen stove watching her push out cocoa. Now she had that new girl to help her, she didn't need him ... Never would need him... If he could only stand, and watch her,– Hell, he had to go on leave tomorrow... Too late to tell the Captain now he didn't want to... Lots of girls in Paris, so the boys said. While she was here, you didn't care nothin' about them French girls... After she'd left, it got you awful restless. There'd been a day in Nancy,– Here she was, comin' over to set, talk to you... He pulled a chair up, opened the oven door for her to put her feet in, stood there, hands behind him. Things, different, since you used to set, and talk here... Just one thing to talk about now, and that you couldn't mention... And she set, starin' at her shoes there in the oven...

"Say," he looked down at her. "Will you do somethin' for me?"

"Sure." She looked up. So Life was hurting him, too... "What is it?"

"Give me one of them big, brown pins you wear in your hair."

Anne laughed. "What in the world,–" She stopped. The man was in dead earnest...

"I'm goin' on my leave tomorrow," he said. "I just thought I'd like to have something of yours to,– to,– sort of hold onto." He stood, silent, looking through the window. Well, he never had expected to get anything for what he'd done for this girl...

She put her hand up to her hair, pulled out the shell pin. "Here," she said. "Take it."

"Thanks." He put it in his pocket. Her eyes,– Better go now... As easy now as later... He walked toward the door. Christ...

"Listen," she said. He stopped, not turning. "You'll send it back to me if,– if you,– stop holding?"

"Sure." He turned and went out into the darkness. Christ, why had he told them that he wanted his leave now...

...

Things. Anne bent over her trunk in the soft lamplight, wedging them in. Strange how things collected... Men gave them to you: fur coat, a fur-lined flying suit, insignia from airplanes, a black cross from the wing of a Gotha, pieces of propellers... This was Christmas evening. What a day... She and the other girl had kept open house all day ... Without Berthe,– double quantities of cocoa... Three crates of cookies... She'd eaten dinner with her old squadron, blushed while the men made speeches... Got back to find Berthe with a small army of French children. They'd had a Christmas tree, with candles, tinsel, presents for the children, Kuntz dressed like Santa Claus with a wool beard... Children, climbing on the laps of soldiers... Soldiers holding them on their shoulders, the children reaching for the tinsel, pulling it all off... Draping it round their necks, laughing... Music,– French

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songs in uncertain, childish voices... Time to go home,– they didn't want to go,– and then, a little boy who ran at Anne and kissed her... The soldiers, yelling... A knock at her door. Thump, thump. 'Yes?' 'The Adjutant's out here. Wants to see you,' said Mr. Gaskell. Anne walked out through the long, cold corridor. How familiar,–

"Get your coat," said the Adjutant. "You've got to come to the dance..."

...

A long barrack, decorated with boughs of spruce trees. Huge bunches of French mistletoe hanging from rafters. Bright lanterns, swaying. Jazz music. Girls in blackish uniforms, shiny buttons on ugly pockets over their chests, dancing... Officers dancing... Music, jazzing... Officers standing in groups, singing, beating time with their feet.

'I'll be down to get you in a taxi, honey,
You better be ready 'bout a half past eight,
Now dearie, don't be late,
I want to be there when the band starts playing,
Remember when we get there, honey,–'

Anne and the Adjutant edged their way among them. "Who'd ever believe we were in Avency?" she said. The young men turned,– 'Miss Wentworth! Hello!' Smiling, gripping her hand as she passed. 'When did you get back? Dance with me!' 'Dance with me...'

"Out of the way, Colby, I've got the first one!" The Adjutant put his arm round her. "And the Colonel's got the second!" They whirled off. Anne laughed. Dancing... So long since you'd danced... Something melting,– that queer, grim life of war-time slipping, slipping... Officers, dancing with the new girls, turning to call her... Their partners, looking at her, 'who's that?' Why, didn't they know? That was Miss Wentworth! Why, Gee, in the war she,– Why, this post couldn't have got on without Miss Wentworth,– They didn't like her at first, but now they,– Why she used to come up to mess each night in her tin hat. Used to stand with 'em in a trench for hours. A sport, Miss,– The new girls weren't excited. They wished their uniforms were cut to make them look as slim as hers did... Why, they thought people didn't like the Y.M.,–

"'Member the way you used to come in here in your tin hat to dinner?" The Adjutant pulling Anne this way, that way, panting...

'Goin' to dance out both my shoes,
When they play the Jelly Roll Blues,
Tomorrow night at the Darktown Strutters Ball!'

people singing...

"Yes. It was a great war, wasn't it?" said Anne...

...

She sat on a bench beside the Colonel, picking the lettuce from her salmon salad. Never any more salmon, as long as you lived... She had

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promised to eat supper with Fitzpatrick,– he and Colby had had quite a dispute about that. But the Colonel wouldn't sup with anyone, it seemed, but her. Had glared at Fitzpatrick when he came up. And Fitzpatrick had winked at Anne, and walked off.

"Goin' to have a surprise in a minute," barked the Colonel. "Wait'll you hear it!" A squad of German prisoners marched toward the piano. On their faces the stiff, expressionless look of wooden soldiers. One of them stepped out before the others, held his hand up. Then, wonderfully, through the barrack, there came music. Men's voices, singing in close harmony... Old, old words...

'Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Alles schläft, einsam wacht,
Nur das traute, hocheilige Paar,–
Holde Knabe im lockigen Haar,–
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh',
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh'!'

Anne bent forward, listening. Enemies, who could sing so... The Colonel chuckled. So, the Girl liked it! Rather please her than,– Didn't give a damn about these other women. Why hadn't they come up here while there was a war on? This girl had more guts. Prettier, too, by God... What? She wanted the first one again? Sure, anything she wanted. Colby! The first one over again, tell 'em. H'hem! His prisoners, these... Make 'em do the Goose Step for her if she wanted... No, she didn't want the Goose Step...

The singing, almost over. Anne leaned her head back against the board wall, her eyes closed. Voices, filled with sadness... Filled with the longing for one's family, for home... The lost hope of Christianity for peace...

'Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh'
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh'!'

A second of silence. Then the Colonel clapped uproariously. Everyone, clapping... Anne rose to go home. Like to leave it, like this...

"Good night," she said. Must thank him... "You've been awfully good to me up here. I've loved it,–" The words stuck. This place... This place... As near a frontier as she would ever get to... This had been,– She gulped, swallowed.

"Why, what's the matter?" said the Colonel.

"I'm going away tomorrow," Anne said...

...

Paris. Streets unbelievably bright with lights. Streets full of people. Streets filled with the uniforms of innumerable Americans. French taxicabs, whose drivers did not want to take you. French people arguing with them... Anne put her hand in her capacious, military pocket, drew out a package of cigarettes, green and bright red. The taxi driver's hand jerked toward it. 'Ah, entrez, Madame! Entrez...' 'Tiens!' The French people, gaping... Watching her drive off...

...

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Morning. One had always to waste at least one day in Paris... The bridge. The river, flowing swiftly, muddy. Old men, fishing. The Place, with its market. Faint, familiar odor of sewage from the corner ... Paris... The Avenue Montaigne. Horse-chestnut trees, with sticky, brown buds. Air Service Headquarters, with a sentry outside. The flag, drooping... Feet turning in,– Couldn't help it, hadn't they turned in every morning for a lifetime? Up the white stone stairs, with their red carpet... A smell of perfume, pungent, stifling... The sound of atomizers, wheezing. Anne stopped in a doorway. It was the room where Rose and Rosalie used to,– Rose and Rosalie and their General in the S.O.S. now... Three husky soldiers walked round the room squirting with little gilt things. Against the marble mantelpiece leaned a lieutenant, smoking.

"Why, Miss Wentworth! Where have you been all this time? Come in, come in..." Lind, grasping her hand. The ribbon of the Croix de Guerre on his chest...

"What are you doing?" Anne said.

"See this stuff?" Lind turned three quart bottles on the mantel toward her. Rue de la Paix, seals, prizes... 'Emeraude,' 'Muguet,' 'Jacinthe.' "Carpet always did smell funny in here. Remember? The General always used to crab about it. Told us to fix it. And now, by Gosh, this room is going to be reserved for Pershing. So I signed a requisition for some perfume. Want to squirt? It's lots of fun, this squirting,–"

"I'll say it is!" A soldier straightened up, making a wry face. "Say Sarge," he said, "we'd oughta have our gas masks."

The Sergeant chuckled. "Say, Miss Wentworth, you know what you have to pay for them little flat bottles of this stuff downtown!" he said. "Well, we got five quarts,–'

"For Pershing," said Lind. Anne laughed.

"It's *still* a great war!"

...

Brock, in another room, at a new desk. His pale face, lighting... Legs unwinding... "Well, I'll be doggoned! Say, whyn't you come sooner? If you'da been here yesterday, you coulda gone to see the Frawgs hangin' a Legion of Honor on the Colonel. He got kissed,–"

"Did they give you one?" said Anne.

"No, they passed me up, but Lind, he got a Croix de Guerre. 'N' they kissed him, too! Say, I thought I'd die laffing. I got the old lady a ticket, she sure was pleased! The Colonel's going home soon,–" He walked out with her, into the hallway.

"And Lettice?" Anne watched him. Eyes, twinkling above those wry lines...

"She's back. They say he's going to take her home to his wife. The scandal's over,–"

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"Or just beginning," Anne said...

...

Crowds in the Gare de Lyon. American officers, American soldiers, on leave, trying to go to Biarritz, to Aix-les-Bains... A line of fifty before the ticket window, waiting... Moving forward slowly... 'Il n'y a pas de place, Mademoiselle. The train de luxe is filled for more than three weeks.' The woman in the ticket window grouchy. 'Not possible to go to the Côte d'Azur...' Anne backed off from the window. She'd got to go... She had wired Rosalind and Randolph that she'd be there. "Voilà!" she handed her bag to a whiskered, bent old porter. She handed him American cigarettes, in a bright-colored package. "You'll take these bags, and when the train de luxe is ready to go, you will run, fast. Compris?"

"Oui, oui, Madame!" He scuttled through the opening for baggage, Anne after him, in full flight. 'Votre billet, Madame! Votre billet! Madame! Madame!' The gateman shouting wildly, waving at her. These Americans! Disgusting the way they broke rules... Anne ran on. Heavens! A little fellow on the platform, looking at tickets. She stopped before him, breathless. She held up five packages of cigarettes. 'Mais non, Madame!' he shouted. She opened her bag,—drew out a carton. 'Eh, bien...' He handed up her last bag to the porter. 'Madame could stand in the corridor?' he asked her...

...

The floor of the corridor was hard, and very dirty. Anne's head, on her musette bag, jiggled. Her hip bone prodded the hard floor as she turned over. Beyond her, lay three soldiers, feet against head, in the narrow passage. The place was dark, cold, and from a door that flapped, there came the smell of sewage. Anne pulled her trench coat over her, and shivered. Under her she heard the plunk, plunk of a flat wheel. It didn't matter... Nothing any longer, seemed to matter...

...

Feet, kicking into you, and trying to get past. A captain, stumbling, catching himself by the window ledge... "Good Heavens. Sleeping there?" the Captain yawning. "Come in with us." In the darkened compartment, three sleepy officers shoved over. Anne wedged herself between them. A French captain in the corner snorted, woke up. Ah! these Americans! They had no manners... Tiens! So they had found a woman! Et quel effroyable courant d'air! He rose, stepped on their feet, banged shut the window. Strange, what these Americans could see to laugh at... He sat down, dozed off. The American Captain rose, let down the window. Night air, filling the foul place... The Major opposite to Anne groaned, snorted, shifted his legs, bringing his spur down hard against her knee-cap. She moved her legs to one side, hit the Captain's. He woke up, smiled at Anne through the dim light...

"Say, it's a great war," he said...

...

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Anne woke up. "Ah! Look!" Sun shining on a blue sea... She opened the window, leaned out. The young men stretched themselves, did up their collars. 'God, what a night!' "The sun," said Anne. Like home... Like New England, that,– Sun, on a blue sea...

"Sure. That's what we came for, to see if the sun was still there!" The Captain's beard was sprouting...

"Why, I'd forgotten that it could shine," Anne said...

...

The bed was large and soft, and covered with white linen. Room, with pink walls... Silk curtains at the broad window that opened onto a balcony of marble... Anne opened her eyes. Ah, there she was... Last night she'd had a hot bath. She'd dressed, for dinner... She turned her head. Beyond the marble balustrade, the tops of trees, a space, a grey sea... A miracle of pink, turning to gold. She jumped up, went to the window, stepped out. Cold marble, under bare feet... The earth's thrill, rising, through you... A breeze, that blew the soft night-gown about her body. She stretched her arms up, feeling the muscles pulling. Across the sea, a ray of golden light, that grew... The old earth moving, moving, edge of the grey sea slipping from the sun's face... A path of gold... A dazzle... The sun... Anne turned. You couldn't look,– Always that way,– you could look only at the square of light that fell across the carpet. She crept back to bed, lay, watching the blue sky. For moments at a time, you could forget War... She snuggled down into the linen sheets. But wholly, never...

...

She wandered on the Promenade du Midi. Sunshine... Civilian clothes... Pleasant to look down at a skirt that was dark blue, and neat,– not the eternal grey-green whipcord, with its mud spots. Shucks. Here came three American soldiers, strolling. You'd have to say 'Hello' to them, have to smile nicely... Eternal obligation of being American... No, they weren't looking, weren't paying any attention to you. Going past. They didn't even see you. Heavens, what was,– Ah, the clothes! You were anonymous in your own clothes... They didn't know you... By laying aside your whipcords, you had laid aside your membership, your obligation... You wouldn't have to smile for a whole week, now... Wonderful... Independent... But just the same, it was a little lonely...

...

"Let's get a drink," said Randolph, "the afternoon gets damned cold,–" He dragged himself toward one of the small, iron tables outside the Café d'Italie. Beside him, Rosalind drifted, lovely in her new clothes. Happy... Happy... They ordered Cointreau triple sec, and waited. Anne watched them. Strange contrast between the radiating bliss of Rosalind, and that strained, nervous anxiousness of Randolph's... Rosalind, living her great experience... Having, in these weeks, everything she wanted... Randolph, trying to forget Life's

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thrill... Trying to bring himself to face the future with an injured body. "Let's go to Monte-Carlo tomorrow," he said, "and listen to some music. You all can work off your damned energy by walking, and grandpa'll take a carriage,–" Beside Randolph's chair, three American soldiers pushed past. He looked up at them. Husky,– God,– As fine a looking feller as he'd seen, that big one... Anne, looking at the big one...

MacLeod. His big hand, almost touching the back of her dress... Gosh... Pulling a chair out at a table just behind her. 'We got to make it snappy, boys. The train goes,–' That was his voice... Why did the feel of him put her into this strange turmoil...

Randolph looked at her. Good God, where was the girl going? Bolting across the sidewalk, jumping into a barouche there... Anne sat in the old cab, leaning back, her face behind its shabby cover. If they didn't come quick, she'd go without them...

"What in Hell's the hurry, Anne?" Randolph pulled himself in, his fingers whitening on the cab's edge, his face flinching,– The Pain... "Damn..."

"I'm on a vacation from the soldiers," Anne said...

...

Paris,– different. Full of people. The Peace Conference, beginning. The world acclaiming Wilson. Paris,– a woman in her best clothes, smiling... These people didn't know Paris, they hadn't seen her,– suffer... How seldom anyone really saw inside things... Through the soft rain, Anne wandered past the Hôtel Crillon. Have to decide what you were going to do now. The Y., wanting her to go to Germany,– 'We need you there, Miss Wentworth,–' Or should she go home? Home, so far away... So unreal... Men, in civilian clothes wandering out the door there... How queer men's legs looked in those hideous, flapping trousers! A young man, in a brown felt hat, coming toward her... Long, long ago men used to wear hats,– Used to leave them on the table in the front hall at Downham,– She stopped. Why, it was Hugh MacDonald. Grown fat... Bowing, taking that strange, familiar, peace-time hat off... "Hugh!"

"Anne!" Hugh looked at her as he shook hands. How much older she looked... How thin... Her face all eyes... Lovely eyes, Anne's...

"What are you doing here?" she asked. Hugh had had a job in Washington or somewhere... Had not felt that he ought to leave Jane... Hugh, growing heavy, his hair thin on top... Throwing his chest out,–

"Why I'm here for the Peace Conference, Assistant to Professor Youngman,– very important, you know, one of the experts,– Jane? Oh, Jane's fine,– I left her at home with the two kids,–"

"Two kids? Good Lord,–" Anne stopped. Why, after all, shouldn't Hugh have two kids? People did have children... In another world from this one...

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"Sure. Cute as can be. Like to show you their pictures,– isn't there any place to lunch round here?" Anne laughed.

"Where do you think you are, Hugh?" She guided him to Voisin's. What was Voisin's? He'd see. Oh. Funny little place. What would they eat,– never could read these French menus. But she could. She knew. How about a bottle of Château-Olivier, she was asking... What's Château-Olivier? Oh, sure... Fine... Gosh, he wondered how much this meal would cost him... Anne didn't seem to think at all about that... Nobody over here seemed to think about that... "How did you come to be such a connoisseur of food, Anne? I don't suppose you had much to eat in the war,–" Again she laughed.

"What *do* you suppose that people do in war, Hugh?" Hugh's face, losing its blandness... He rammed his hands in his civilian pockets, slumped back, silent. He didn't know. And now, he never would know... Tough, to have had to stay at home with Jane, and watch the others,– Jane would have let him, but,– War,– what was it? Like a colossal joke, that you weren't in on,– And here was Anne, a girl, and she'd seen... She knew... And he,– Queer, how those officers had put up a kick about the Crillon being taken over. 'But it's the best bar in Paris,' they'd kept saying... Well, too late now... Be too old for the next one...

"I've been doing my bit against the Hun at home," said Hugh. "Shipping Board, you know,– Had our share of trouble with spies on the transports,– God, how I hate those Germans!" Surprise in Anne's grey eyes... And sadness...

"Really? The ones I've known are so nice!" she said. "Our men all like 'em." Hugh looked at her. Queer,– the Germans had killed old Geoffrey, yet she,– The waiter, passing him a tray covered with little dishes. Sardines, radishes, pieces of hard-boiled egg in some sauce, mushrooms, old herrings,– queer things. 'Take this one,' Anne was pointing, 'this is delicious.' The waiter, helping her to the ones she wanted... Understanding every word,– Astonishing how well she spoke French... Hugh told her about her Uncle Caleb's new mill. How many thousand suits of underwear the Huntington Mills had turned out. What a terrific success it had been...

Anne looked out the window past him. Underclothes, sticking to blood, matted into it... Being chopped away with pieces of flesh... Underclothes, with little, black bugs...

"Why don't you go home, Anne? You look ill. I think I've got enough pull to get you on a steamer." Anne's eyes came back. Frightened... Queer,– Anne had been bombed,– been under shell fire,– he'd seen a letter that her family had published in the paper... Queer she should be frightened...

Anne stared at his collar, his necktie, his waistcoat, the gold watch chain looped across it. Go home? See all those people who couldn't understand it? Who didn't know... Easier to stay, with people who'd

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been through,– Tired... No energy, now, to begin a new life... Easier to go where life was simple, direct...

"Thanks," she said, "I think I'll go to Germany with the soldiers."

...

They walked down the rue Saint-Honoré under Hugh's umbrella. Strange to be walking with a civilian... Under an umbrella. Two American soldiers passed, saluting. 'Hello,' Anne said.

"Who were they?" said Hugh.

"I don't know. Doughboys,–"

"But they saluted."

"My uniform. We all belong to one thing. Friends,– in the same box, sort of." Her chin went up. Proud of her uniform... It made her part of something Hugh was out of... A pretty woman in a fur coat stepped across the sidewalk, toward an army limousine in the Place Vendôme. "There's Louise Kimball," said Hugh. "She's here with Arthur. Her father's a big gun at the Peace Conference, you know, and Arthur's his secretary,–"

The pretty woman looked up. How different American women were from French ones... "Anne!" A little scream. She flung her white gloves round Anne's military collar. Years, centuries ago, Anne had been at school with this girl... A delicious perfume as she kissed her. How exquisite her face was... Lace about her neck, and pearls, and fur. "Get right in and come home with me," she was saying, "good-bye, Hugh, I'll see you tonight, shall I, at the dinner?" The limousine rolled into the Quartier Saint-Germain, turned in under the high grill of an old French palace. "Arthur's moved us in here to stay for the Conference," Louise said. "But Mama's looking for an apartment on the other side. This hasn't enough heat." A soldier jumped out, opened the limousine door. Tough-looking... Hard-boiled... "Now Matthews," Louise laid her white glove on the khaki forearm, "do just come in the hall and wait. I'm afraid you'll catch cold if you sit out here." The soldier looked at Anne. A flash... A merry twinkle.. Gawd, a guy that had a limousine to set in,–

"Sitting pretty?" said the Y.M.C.A. girl.

"I'll tell the world!" They both laughed...

...

Three American sailors stood in the gracious hallway of the old, French palace, on their hips great revolvers. 'To guard Papa,' Louise whispered. A girl came down the broad stair, pointed, high-heeled shoes, silk stockings, floating skirts, fur coat, golden hair under a chic hat. Behind her a young naval officer in gold and dark blue. 'Just going out to dance for half an hour...' 'Yes, darling, good-bye...' 'See you tonight...' A perfume of violets as she drifted past them. 'That's my young cousin, Mary Lou,– Mama brought her with us. She's having *such* a good time...'

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"Oh," Anne stumbled on the soft rug. "I didn't know,– one came here,– for a good time!"

A room, with a soft carpet, walls of yellow damask... A great bed under a canopy of pale blue satin. A maid, who took Louise's coat. Louise slipped off her dress. Slender, white arms... Lace-edged chemise... Petticoat, over tight corsets,– so they still wore those? Anne watched. "You don't mind if I dress? There's a reception this afternoon to the Ladies,–"

"What ladies?"

"The ladies of the Peace Conference, Mrs. Wilson, Mama,–"

"Oh, so they've all got their wives?" Anne took her uniform hat off. How quaint it looked against the bed's blue satin...

"Why yes. Of course." Louise, before the mirror, leaning forward, touching her hair with slender, manicured fingers. "Why not?"

"There are men in hospitals up north," said Anne, "who haven't seen their wives for two years,–" She stopped. She gazed past the maid's frilled apron into the closet. Slippers standing in a row, high-heeled and graceful... Gold, pink, peacock green, purple, silver, with flashing buckles... Butterflies, made of bits of ostrich feather... There had been a world once where you,–

"My God!" said Anne.

Louise looked at her, startled. "Why Anne, dear, what's the matter?" Anne, pointing to the slippers.

"I'd forgotten things like that existed!" she said...

...

A half-familiar back in the window of Anne's room, gazing out toward the Eiffel Tower when she got back. The woman turned,–

"Joan!" Why, Joan was ten years older... Her hair had turned grey...

"Anne!" What had happened to Anne? Her face all eyes... All,– she must have been ill,– "I'm going home," said Joan. "You know we've got to, sometime." Tears in Joan's eyes. Anne kissed her.

"Let's go to dinner," she said.

...

"Your President,–" The Comtesse d'Estrée stood near the china stove, gesticulating at Joan. It was as if the little Countess had come suddenly to life since the war stopped,– her Raoul, still a corporal but still, heureusement, alive... "Your President is a great man. We are convinced, we French, he will do great things. But why, Mademoiselle, why does he drag his wife with him partout?" Anne, by the piano, on which Christiane was tinkling forth dance music, turned her head to listen.

"It is the habit in America," said Joan.

"Tiens! But it makes a bad impression in France! With us, the President of the Republic does not show himself with his wife in the streets when it is a question of official ceremony."

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"Why not?" said Joan. Behind the barricade of the piano, Anne smiled. Christiane smiled, pleased that Mees Ventvort liked her music...

"In France,–" Madame de Mourgues joined in,– she comprehended better than the Countess these Americans and their queer ways,– "Enfin, the wife of the President of the Republic is not always the type of woman that one receives with open arms in the great world. The wives of political men, you understand, have not always been au-dessus de tout reproche, in France. That is why one sees with a bad eye these women, covered with jewels and with showy clothes, who arrive from America. The mission of these men would have been more imposing, if they had come alone, uniquely preoccupied with their great task,– you understand?"

"Well," said Joan, "not quite." She strolled toward the door. Too deep for her, this...

"Oh, la! la!" The little Countess tossed her hands up. "Have we vexed her? Ah, ces Américains!" She leaned her head back on the sofa, turning to Madame. "Ils ont un goût extraordinaire! Why do American officers, par exemple, show themselves in the streets with women for whom even our simple soldiers would have no use? Les filles de barrière, Raoul has told me that they go about with. One demands why, when there are so many women now, in Paris? The English, on the contrary, are fastidious. They have a special bureau in Paris, Raoul says. When an English officer comes, en permission, he has only to send word to the bureau, and one chooses for him une femme très élégante,–"

"The English," said Madame de Mourgues, "have more the habit of the great world,– It is the naïveté of Americans that gives them power,–" Anne, by the piano, smiled. Christiane, finishing her tune, looked up:

"You find that pretty?" she said.

"Yes, very pretty," said Anne...

...

"I'm going home." Joan sat, clasping her knees before the fireplace in Anne's room. "While I was in Dijon, I thought the only thing in the world I wanted was to go home. Now that I've got my passage, I don't want to go."

"It'll be hard." Anne stood, back to the fire. Home,– so far... So different...

"I want to go back to the hospital," said Joan. "Walk down the ward,– hear the men calling me. Do things for 'em, till I'm dead each night. We think we hate these dirty jobs we do. It's rot. We really love 'em."

"Sure. Women slip back into primitive things far easier than men do. Men slip,– but all the same they hate it,– want to get above it."

"I don't know why I go home." Tears in Joan's eyes now...

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"You'll get good breakfasts, hot baths,–"

"They don't mean anything any more," said Joan. "Nothing matters to me any more, Anne. Does it to you?" Joan's tears, dripping... Anne lit a cigarette, and puffed it.

"Not very much," she said.

...

"Un monsieur qui attend," who could it be? They were all dead,– or,– Anne walked down the hall toward the salon. Hugh MacDonald, top hat and cane in his hand, white silk scarf puffing above his dark coat... You used to see those,– 'Chief wanted me to stop in and ask if you'd come in and do a job with us, Anne,–' Hugh excited... Didn't know that the excitement was all over... 'You'd be at the Crillon,– making history,–' Anne looked at him. Stiff, white shirt front,– neat white waistcoat,– gold studs... Who made history, anyway? People in palaces? Or people out, in the mud...

"Thank you. I'm going to Germany with the soldiers," she said...

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BOOK V

'Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: But I say unto you, Love your enemies...'

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BOOK V

ANNE, and three lieutenants leaned their heads out of the train window in the darkness. They had passed Toul, passed Pont-à-Mousson. It was like coming to the world's edge. Where was it,– Pagny,– where once the world stopped? 'There!' said one of the lieutenants. 'There! See!' A black field flashing past, a low fence of barbed wire, a ditch. The lieutenant laughed.

"I sat in that ditch three weeks," he said...

...

Metz. Midnight. The station huge, clean, efficient. On the walls, advertising posters in neat spaces. Why, this was like the U.S.... France, slipping away... With her, the flavor of the Middle Ages... This place was modern. 'Doubt if you'll get a billet,' said the M.P. 'The Frogs have this town.' Anne and the three lieutenants walked to the Town Major's office. A French sergeant in shabby blue, with a blue helmet, stood up, saluted: 'Pas de chambre.' He shrugged his shoulders. 'C'est la guerre!' he added. They went back to the baggage counter at the station and stretched themselves along it, feet against heads, heads resting on musette bags. Clean, anyway, now you were in Germany... Wouldn't be clean long, after the French had owned it... One could sleep almost anywhere now... It didn't matter... The lieutenant at Anne's feet laughed. Anne laughed. The one at her head laughed. 'It's a great war...'

...

The train for Coblenz. Just starting time,– Anne got on slowly,– there'd be half an hour... But no, it started, on time... A conductor, in a clean uniform, looking at tickets... The cars clean, decent,– this was a German train, then...

...

Coblenz. Crowds hurrying about the station. A German porter standing over Anne and talking in a guttural, unknown language. Across his shoulder an American M.P., grinning. "The Heinie's askin' you if you want a cab," said the M.P. "You don't want no cab. We got a truck outside." He turned and gave directions to the man in German. 'You speak the stuff?' Anne said. She'd learned it once in school. Now it had left her. French words came... "Aw, say, I talked it all my life," said the soldier. "All the boys knows it."

...

Anne drew a long breath. Air, crisp and cold, the moisture frozen

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under. White snow, hard packed in the street. Cold air, rushing against your face, bringing the blood up. Air that tingled... Why, this was winter! Glorious, northern winter! Like home, this... The Y. Headquarters, buzzing full of people. They wore strange, bright insignia on their coat sleeves, Rainbows, Arrows, Indian Heads, Figures One, cut from red flannel. There was the stir of greetings and of laughter. Anne hurried up the stairs. Life... The brave excitement of Adventure... If you stopped, you'd,–

"Anne!" Evelyn Tollet thumped her shoulder, kissed her. "Oh, I'm so glad you've come! Germany's wonderful,– we're in the cutest towns across the river! Come and meet Miss O'Donnell,–"

"You're not afraid to go alone, Miss Wentworth?" asked Miss O'Donnell. Anne smiled.

"If I had been, I'd have died of fright before now!"

"You'll report at the Officers' Club tonight for a dance," said Evelyn. "Don't want to? Got to, it's your first duty up here!"

"Oh," said Anne, "is it?"

...

Anne walked out past houses, made of heavy red stone, ugly with wide plate-glass windows. Everywhere she met Americans, and they saluted, gayly. They seemed strangely at home here among these ugly houses with their porches. The street ended at a broad promenade,– a balustrade with an American soldier leaning on it, against a broad space. The Rhine... She saw it suddenly,– its broad stream flowing, majestic, northward. Above the river, high on a rock, a fortress. The kind of fort you used to make in sand when you were children... And now, the last rays of the winter sun that slanted up and touched it. From a high pole a flag untwisted, billowed. Anne stood still, looking. Why, it was your flag... Silly tears rising... What was it, this feeling that rose in your throat and choked you? The flag shone in the slanting, winter sunlight.

"That there is Ehrenbreitstein," said the soldier...

...

Jazz filled the Officers' Club. An American colonel greeted Anne at the bottom of the varnished stairway. "Just come to Germany? Well, see how nice we're fixed here!" He led Anne about the great rooms. "See, steam radiators under every window." 'I see,' Anne's lips were parched with dryness. "A fireplace here in the parlor," he pointed to an atrocity of green and purple tiles, untouched by fire, "but we don't ever need to use it. Not like France!"

"No," said Anne. "Not like France!"

"Just like our own homes in the U.S." said the Colonel.

"I suppose it is," Anne said...

...

Steam heat that sizzled in the corner of the hotel room. A warm, dry place. Anne stood there, looking round her. Everything neat,

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clean. Everything ugly. Stiff curtains, purple, with green edges, running neatly up one side of the window, across the top, down the other. Huge feather thing on the bed there,– 'Like home,' the officers had all said, 'Like home, this!' Nice to get undressed where it was warm, though...

...

"A job for you." Miss O'Donnell smiled across her desk.

"Thank God!" said Anne,– she'd wandered round three days now. Tea? Tea with a General? Good God... She wanted a real job... Major Smith waiting in the other room, oh... General had had pneumonia, he needed cheering,– strange jobs they gave you up here... Cheering Generals not exactly what you'd come for... "Oh, I see," said Anne...

...

A great house stood in bare woods, above the river. The Cadillac purred forward up the curved drive. Huge porte cochère... Shiny plate-glass windows, half covered with dark blue shades... Aides who came forward, smiling, met you, led you inside. A great drawing room,– everything dark with blue plush... A tall man with a white face, dark circles under his eyes, who came forward... His hand, limp... It was as if the stiffness of his uniform were holding him up... The General. Tea. The General watching Anne's hands among the tea things, listening to her ask aides and Chief of Staff if they took milk... The General waiting to be talked to. Anne looked out the window. What did you say to Generals? She watched a grey-bearded old man, hands clasped at his back, and a small lady in black, who walked gravely up and down the park outside, talking to one another. Her mother, and Josiah,– their backs just like this... "Who are they?" she pointed.

"The Germans who own this house. They saved my life." The General leaned back, stirring his tea. "I was dying. It was before the hospital was opened in Coblenz. There were no nurses up here. Men, you know, can't nurse,– they do their best, but a man's best isn't good enough when you're sick. You need a woman." 'I know,' the girl said. "Well, one night I felt a smooth, cool hand laid on my forehead," said the General. "I opened my eyes: there was a woman standing there. A tall, fine-looking woman all in white,– a great white coif with a Red Cross on her forehead. It was as if an angel had come down from Heaven,–"

"She was the daughter of those two old people out there," the Chief of Staff said. "They came and told me they had a daughter in the German Red Cross, and they'd sent for her. She walked in one evening, all in white, competent, ready. I felt like I was a shipwrecked mariner, and here was a full-rigged vessel come to save me."

"She never spoke," said the General, "but she always knew just what I wanted. I'd ask for something, and she'd shake her head and then

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she'd go and get it. Never a word out of her, but by Jove, she knew her stuff! She pulled me through!"

"Then when the General was better," the Chief of Staff chuckled, "she disappeared, just as mysteriously as she had come. We asked where she was, and the old people said she'd gone back to Berlin. They wouldn't take pay,– didn't even want to come in and let the General thank them."

"You know, Miss Wentworth," the General relaxed in his armchair, leaned toward Anne. "Somehow, you remind me of my wife,–"

"Do I?" said Anne...

...

The band soared, crashing, booming through the Festhalle. It was a sea of khaki-colored shoulders bobbing, swaying, pushing one another. Men, dancing together... And now and then the slim, grey figure of a Y. girl... "Say," a big man with a rainbow on his shoulder gripped Anne's arm. His face was earnest. "Will you dance with me?"

"No. She's mine! Wait'll the next time, buddy!" A small man threw his arm around Anne's waist, and whirled her away. The big man seized another soldier and followed, dancing madly, his face growing redder. A whistle blew. The big man's hand closed like a vise across her shoulder. He tossed her into his grasp and danced off panting fiercely. Anne spoke. He didn't hear her. Just went on swirling, twisting, dodging, his huge hand pressed to her back. A sort of frenzied dancing. A whistle,– men's hands, heavy at her waist, her shoulders... Men's eyes, glaring at one another... 'Say, I got her first, you,–' Ready to kill each other... She chose the one who grabbed the lightest. He put his arm around her carefully, and whirled off. She talked. The soldier didn't listen. No time to talk,– other men trying to grab her... He, trying to dodge them. Trying to hold her. Glancing, nervous, from side to side across his shoulders. Suddenly, with excruciating pain, his hobnailed boots came down on Anne's foot. "I beg your pardon, Ma'am."

"That's all right," Anne said...

...

Anne sat on the front seat of a coughing Ford truck. Down, past the sentry, onto the Schiffbrücke, across it, past another sentry, up into the snowy fields beyond the river. "This division out here hasn't never had girls," the Y. man, talking, "Now they find they can't get on without 'em."

"How do you mean, they can't get on without them?" Anne asked.

"Men,– gettin' restless, you know,–" said the Y. man...

...

A town lay in a river valley, deep among hills. Above her head Anne saw the ruined stone walls of a castle. 'They say a robber baron used to live there,–' the driver turned the truck into the town street. On a pond children skated, rosy-cheeked, arms waving. A row of houses,

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their backs against a white hill. The red triangle of the Y.M.C.A. hung outside a doorway: DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS... The truck stopped. Anne stood alone on the snowy sidewalk. Through a door to the hallway, and through another to a low, hot room. Four men, in Y.M.C.A. uniforms sat round a stove. One of them tipped his chair down, came forward: 'Tompkins is my name,' he began. 'From Little Rock,–' "Is Mr. Roberts here?" Anne asked. She had 'shook hands' with Brother Brown of Idaho, Brother Lewis of Milwaukee, Brother Todd of San Francisco. 'Not here today,' they said. 'He may be back tomorrow. Tompkins'll get you a billet in the next house, – you can set here with us.'

"Thanks," said Anne, "I believe I'll climb the hill there."

...

Two days passed, and no sign of Brother Roberts. Anne had climbed to every hilltop in sight.

...

"Our Father, we ask Thee to help us in this task that Thou hast set before us," Brother Roberts, at last, at the end of the small dining table at the Y. mess. Across from Anne, Brother Brown and Brother Lewis and Brother Todd sat, heads bowed, looking at the stains of coffee on the white cloth. 'Help us, O God.' Anne shifted restless feet under the table. If only they wouldn't wait for God to help them...

...

Another Ford truck bouncing, skipping, chains clinking, slapping at the mud guard. Anne clutched the upright. White, snow-covered hills bounded past. Now the dark shade of spruce forest, and now the gentle greyness of the beech woods... Snow everywhere... The Y. man driving the truck turned up his collar. The wind was biting. "The Colonel up here's very anxious to get a Y. girl," he said...

A tiny town, perched among hills, snow-covered. White plaster houses with black beams and pointed gables. A narrow, steep street. Before a garden, a sentry pacing... Regimental colors... "Well, here we are!" The Ford coughing, boiling... Anne followed the Y. man up the path among the snow piles. He knocked. A roar, 'Come in!' The door opened,– an officer sitting behind a desk, an oily, middle-aged man. Smile breaking over his face, jumping up, coming forward, smiling, smiling. 'Meet Colonel .....' 'It surely is a pleasure to see a lady...' Anne pulled her hand away. He'd take her out himself and see about her billet,– no, no,– it was a pleasure... Anne walked beside the Colonel through the steep street. Didn't like this man...

...

Anne stood in the window of the German forester's house above the town. Outside, against a blank, white snow field, the Y. truck snorted, backed, filled, lurched forward, plunging over the white hill. Gone... She turned. Here she was...

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The room was papered with dark blue. A bed, with a huge puff of eiderdown, a washstand, a white china stove, a fox skin on the bare floor. The face of Bismarck, glowering from a helmet, over the bed... A tall man with a long moustache, his face pasty, sullen, stood in the doorway, looking at Anne. ''N' Abend, Fräulein!' A sullen face, eyes that didn't trust you... The forester's wife, standing on her tiptoes, looked across his shoulder. Behind her, children, whispering, pulling at one another. Trying to peek round their mother's skirts and see the wicked woman. Had they not heard the mother weeping? Complaining to the father that women who went with armies were always wicked?

"Hey! Outa the way, there!" An American soldier came in, dumped Anne's bags down. He flushed. "Anythin' you want?" he said. No place for a girl, this... "Get outa here! 'Raus! 'Raus-mit!" he shouted at the Germans. He slammed Anne's door behind him as he went out. Whad'they wanta send a girl up to a God damn dump like this fer?

Anne stood, alone, in the dark room. Outside the snow field, rolling upward, cut across tall spruce trees that pointed, black, toward the grey sky. Silence. Darkness, growing deeper. She turned and, standing on the edge of the bed, she took down Bismarck.

...

She got a towel from her bag and dried her cold hands. The forester's children peeped at her as she went out. Darkness, and the white snow. Shapes against it. Horses,– a picket line,– this was artillery up here. Horses standing, their heads hanging low, great hip bones humping up against the night sky,– A whack. 'You God damn...' Words... Not new now, but still surprising every time you heard them... She walked on. The Colonel's mess was at the German priest's house. The Adjutant, the Captain of Headquarters company, the Regimental Chaplain,– an Irish priest with a hard, red face,– all standing, waiting. 'Pleased to meet you...' They sat down. 'Well, Padre,–' Jokes at the priest. Some that ended suddenly, in the middle. Above their heads the Colonel's orderly watched Anne as he passed things. Say, whad'they wanta get a girl up here fer?

"Some lemonade, Miss Wentworth?" The Colonel held up a bottle full of red stuff. Great country for wine, this, he said. Champagne, only fifteen cents a bottle. They all looked at the Adjutant, and then they all laughed. "No, thanks," said Anne. "Lieutenant?" "No, thank you, Colonel." No more of that stuff, now they had a girl here ..."Captain? Padre? Why, what's the matter with you folks?" The Colonel drank his. Smacked his lips, poured out another, began telling anecdotes about 'the islands.' The others looked at one another. Say, there were some of those the old man'd better,–

Anne ate in silence. Didn't like this... A snakish glitter in the Colonel's eye as it caught hers. The young officers across the table, nervous... The priest's mouth hard... She felt a foot touch hers under

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STOCKWELL HALL
the table. A gentle pressure, deliberate, arranged. The Colonel's slithery eye gleamed at her. Asking a question... Ugh! She tipped her chair back, quickly, looking under. "I seem to be getting my feet in your way, Colonel," she said. The priest guffawed...

...

"I'll show you the canteen myself," said the Colonel after supper. "The Y.M.C.A. man who's been up here fixed it up a bit. You'll want to do more. If there's any way I can help you, I'll be glad to." He pushed a green door under a Y.M.C.A. sign. The smell of beer... Men's voices. A saloon, this... Across the middle of a large room on the left, a wooden partition. On one side was the Y.M.C.A. canteen. On the other a German girl with a pink face, snubbed nose, dispensing beer to soldiers. Anne closed the door in the partition. "The men are in here all the time," said the Colonel.

"Are they?" said Anne...

...

She stood behind the counter in her blue apron. No one came in. Soldiers looked through the door, grew suddenly embarrassed, passed on to the saloon through the next door. The other side of the board partition must be crowded... Anne could hear hobnails scuffing on the board floor, hear chairs pulled out, shoved in, hear glasses clinking. 'Gut?' said a soldier, beyond the board wall. 'Nay,' drawled Suzanna. 'Spazieren?' said the soldier. There was a giggle. 'Aw, say!' called someone from a table. A scuffle. Again Suzanna giggled. 'Spazieren heute Abend?' said another...

...

A soldier stood in the doorway, looking at Anne. Hell, a woman? Here?

"Cigarettes?" he asked.

"Surely. What kind?" The man stood gulping, silent. What was the matter with him? Better try talking... Anne handed him Camels. "Tell me," she said, "I see the Colonel wears a wound stripe,– where was he wounded?"

"Sir?" The soldier flushed. God damn it, you didn't say 'Sir' to a woman... She was askin' where the God damn Colonel got his wound stripe... Hell, have to,– A crash. Glass clattering. Some God damn son of a ..... had went and threw his glass agin this here partition... The soldier seized his cigarettes and bolted.

...

'Say, how was I goin' to tell her how the God damn old ..... got his wound stripe?' Anne could hear the man's voice in the next room. A roar of laughter...

...

An hour she sat there. 'Heute Abend?' said the soldiers. 'Nay,' drawled Suzanna. Anne took her coat down from a nail, walked out into the steep, white street. 'Miss Wentworth, I believe?' A tall,

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red-headed captain was suddenly walking beside her up the icy road. "I'm Captain McIlarney, of A Battery." Captain McIlarney looked at her. Why in Hell did they want to send a lady,–

"How do you do?" the girl said. They walked on, up the steep street.

"If there's anything," he began. He broke off, strode on, silent. Damn these other fellows,– easy for them to ride over and tell him he'd got to tell her... What if the old man found out he'd been tipping her off? What in Hell did the Y.M.C.A. send women off to places like this for? That Y. man who'd been up here,– he must have known,– ate with the old beast... Why hadn't *he* told her? "If there's anything I can do for you," he began again, "please don't hesitate,–"

"Thank you," said Anne. Why should the man get so upset? Queer, every man in this town seemed to be upset about something except the Colonel...

"If you,– if you should want to come to the Junior Officers' Mess, we eat up in the School House. We'd love to have you. We,– we don't,–"

"Thank you," said Anne. You couldn't get out of messing with a colonel... She stopped. They stood outside the forester's house now. The Captain slapped at his polished boot with his whip. Damn it, he wasn't going to tell her... Couldn't... Why did they try to wish the job on him? Girls that came up to places like this must know that they were taking chances... "If you want any help," he said, "just send one of the boys around to get me."

"Thank you," said Anne.

"Day or night." He saluted.

"Thank you. Good night." She walked up the forester's path between the snow banks. 'Day or night...' What did that mean?

...

The forester's house was pitch dark. Her room, pitch dark. She listened. Voices in the kitchen. She groped her way toward them, knocked at a door. ''Rein!' a bass voice. The kitchen, dark. The faces of the forester and his wife, reddened by the glow from the stove door. "Kann ich, kann ich ein, ein," damn the language, "ein Licht haben?"

"Ach, Fräulein! We have ourselves none. That must you from the Amerikanischen Quartiermeister get. In all Germany are there no lights!" Anne groped her way to her room, opened the stove door. In the dark, she began to take her clothes off. Why had that Captain been so keen to help her?

...

Smothering... Drowning... Something soft, pushing you down, suffocating you... Anne struggled, kicked, sat up. Cold. Two squares of white ahead, against the blackness... Where was this? Windows...

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Windows, looking out onto a snow field... Germany... Army of Occupation... She was at a little town called Ober Kohlstetten. It was this great, sweating feather bed that gave you nightmares... She dumped it off onto the floor and lay down...

...

"Is there anything you want?" The Colonel looked at Anne after luncheon. 'Little Girl' he would have added, only,—

She looked at him. Ugh... Get out... But,— men were more apt to give you things after their luncheon... "There's a nice, big, sunny room above the saloon," said Anne, "up that outside stairway. I wonder if I could have that for the canteen?"

"You can have anything you want Lit,— Miss Wentworth. I'll have some men sent down this afternoon to move you." Anne smiled. Why, this was easy...

"Thank you, Colonel," she said...

...

Morning. Bright sunshine on the white snow. Anne whistled as she straightened up the new room. A nice place, filled with sunlight. Four windows on each side, six low, cross-legged tavern tables, their green paint rubbed by many sleeves to smoothness. If she could get curtains, pots of flowers, games, food,— a lieutenant stood, looking in the doorway.

"My name's Calhoun." He came forward with his hand out. "I was in Geoffrey Wentworth's class at college. I'm over in Nieder Kohlstetten two miles off." He flushed. Queer to be talking to a decent woman... "I've got a machine-gun truck today to go to Coblenz. Would you,— Could I,—" He stopped. Blushed. Of course she wouldn't... 'Oh, can I come too and do some shopping?' she was saying. 'That's great. I'll go and get my fur coat...'

...

"Queer," Calhoun looked at Anne across a tea tray at the Officers' Club at Coblenz. "I never saw you till this morning,—" he puffed his cigarette,— had been terrified to speak to an American girl this morning, but now, after that long ride, the lunch, the shopping tour,— "now,—"

"Now I remind you of your wife,—"

"Not me," Calhoun laughed, "I haven't got one."

...

The new room did look nice... Anne glanced up from the bench where she sat, hemming curtains. Candles, reflected in the soft green of tables... Jars of flowers... Gay, flowered plates in rows on the shelves... It would look nicer still, once she had done these curtains. She bent over the cheesecloth and strips of cherry-colored paper.

Cannoneer Hemholtz came in, sat down, picked up a magazine. Across the top of the magazine, he watched Anne. Sorta like home, to see a woman sewin'... Hoped to Christ she wouldn't look up and ketch

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him, watchin'... They hadn't oughta send girls up to these God damn dumps... God,– if she knowed what you was thinkin', she wouldn't set there, calm like... 'Have a cup o' cocoa?' she wuz sayin'... Sayin' to who? To you? Christ... A guy wasn't used to hearin' a woman,– On'y them foreign women that said 'cooshay' and them things... Here she wuz lookin' at yer...

"Sir?" The man blushed. "How? Why,– why, yes, Sir, I don't mind." Better stop talkin'... First thing you know'd, you'd bust loose in some o' that God damn army lingo... Bringin' you cocoa... Why, you could set here all evenin', if you wanted, drinkin' cocoa... Watchin' this girl... Better'n settin' downstairs, 'n' gettin' tight, 'n' throwin' glasses...

Four men came in, sat down, shoving their caps back. They looked round. Say, this place looked sorta diff'runt, somehow... Couldn't smell beer no more here... Say look at them flowers in the Heinies' milk jugs... Christ, there was the Y. girl, settin', sewin',– Hell, you'd got in the wrong place... Cannoneer Magowan got up, tipping his chair over. Better git out... "Say, boy, whadda you say we have a game of checkers?" Shorty, here, pourin' out some checkers... Pushin' a board out on the table... Magowan sat down. Shorty, beatin' you... Couldn't watch the game for watchin' the woman... American woman ... Bitin' her thread off, just like your mother done it... Twistin' its end and makin' a little knot there... "Aw, say, buddy, you're no good!" Shorty leaned back.

"The Hell I,–" Christ, you mustn't say that,– not before a honest-to-God white woman... Couldn't say nothin' if you weren't a goin' to blaspheme... Magowan got up, bolted down the outside stairway. Hell, why was he runnin'? Wanted to go back... Wanted to talk to that girl... Christ, in six months you hadn't talked to a woman that was decent... "Hello, Gretchen!" he bellowed. A pink face smiled at him across a fence top. "Spazieren?" he called. "Jetzt?"

...

"Say, Hemholtz, ain't you readin' that magazine upside down?" Shorty was laughing. Old Hemholtz settin', starin' at the Y. girl...

"Will somebody come and hold this curtain while I tack it?" Hemholtz jumped, dropped the magazine on the floor.

"Sir?" said Shorty. "Why certainly." Hemholtz watched her handing the thing to Shorty. God damn Shorty... He coulda reached that window 'thout standin' on a God damn chair like Shorty... He'da liked t'a helped her... 'Will you come, too?' Why, she was lookin' at yer... Whyn't you move? Whyn't you say somethin'? Steady, soldier, steady. "Sir?" he stammered. God, she was beckonin' to him. Damn these chairs... Damn his clumsy, tremblin' fingers... The girl was next him, standin' right beside him... He could smell her, kind o' clean and soapy... Christ, what made his knees knock? Jesus, if she know'd about you, she wouldn't lean her hand down on your

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shoulder... Not even if she fell off the bloomin' table... There, it was done now... Didn't it look pretty? she was askin'. What look pretty? Hemholtz mopped his brow on his sleeve. Better git out, where you could git some air an' stop this sweatin'... Stumblin' down them steps down past the s'loon door... Red Connors, invitin' you to come in and have a beer... "Aw, Hell, I'm full o' cocoa," muttered Hemholtz...

...

Morning. Anne walked down over the bright snow. Whack... From the picket line... 'You God damn .....' Whack, whack... A horse, tossing its head up, lunging backwards. 'Don't let him lie down, you God damned son of a bitch.' The Corporal yelling, running. 'Doncha know that if they lie down they won't never get up?'

"Good morning," Anne said, loudly. Men, peering round the mangy flanks of horses... 'Hey, police de talk, dere!' But one horse was lying down... Two,– great, mangy corpses... Their bloated stomachs lumping up between the helpless, thin legs... The creature next them, with his head down, eyes closed... A soldier, currying him between the bare spots...

"Good for the glue pot," said the soldier, grinning. "One or two of 'em goes every day now."

"Do they?" said Anne...

...

Anne finished the last of the new curtains. They added a fluffy whiteness, a gayety, with their borders of bright-colored paper. Have to get somebody to hold this while she tacked it... That tall man,– "Hemholtz!" she said. He dropped the book that he was holding. Crash, bang. Christ, she knowed his name! That 'ud show that God damn Shorty where to git off... "Yes, Ma'am." Say, that was better... That 'uz the way you should talk to a lady... He gathered up the curtain, held it in little bumps, like she had showed him, watching her thin, nimble fingers as she drove the tacks in. Well, anyways, he didn't sweat today when he stood next her...

"That's fine. Thanks." She rested her hand on his shoulder as she jumped down. Man getting used to her... Not trembling today... These others would, too...

"Say," Shorty strutted up, his blouse unbuttoned. "Suppose you could sew this here button on my blouse?" He sat down next her while she got her thread out. That 'ud show Hemholtz... "D'ju know," he said, watching her thread a needle, "you look a little bit like my wife." "Do I?" said Anne. Hemholtz, in the corner, undid his blouse. His fingers trembled. With a jackknife, he sawed a button off it...

...

Another Y. girl,– it was nice to see another Y. girl,– and two men were at the Colonel's mess that evening. 'Going to give a show in the beer garden over at Nieder Kohlstetten...' 'Oh, how nice.' Anne sat down next to one of the strange Y. men. Damn... She wanted

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to stay in the canteen this evening... Just beginning to get the men to really like the canteen... 'No, no lemonade for me. I never touch it...'

Anne avoided sitting next to the Colonel in the automobile that took them to the next town. The Hall,– the Colonel stepped into the saloon on his way in, came out, smacking his lips. He led Anne to the front bench. Behind them, a row of officers. And behind them, the soldiers. In front the band crashed, tingling their ear drums. The show was on. A Y. girl and two men doing their stunts, the soldiers laughing. The Colonel whispered something in Anne's ear, got up and edged out after the first act. Anne talked to Lieutenant Calhoun sitting behind her. Nice to have him there...

The Colonel came back. Anne shoved along the bench as he sat down. In his eyes that leery, after-dinner twinkle... He bent over, whispered something. Breath, smelling of liquor... Anne shoved further over. He laughed uproariously, and clapped during the next act, shoving over, till his stout thigh touched Anne's. She moved again, bumping the Captain next her. The Colonel was getting up and going out again... If only this were over... Stronger smell of liquor when he came back... On the stage, the Y. girl trying to make the boys sing the chorus of a new song... The Colonel joining in, looking down at Anne as he sang...

'She's got a pair of eyes, that speak of love, 'n Everything...'

Anne moved over on the bench again. The Captain moved over. Beyond him the Major moved over. Beyond him the Lieutenant at the end fell off the bench, and moved back. Hell, why couldn't they stay where they belonged on that bench...

'She's got a smile like angels, up above, 'n Everything...
The little birdies start to sing,
When they see her they think it's spring,
Like April showers,
She makes the flowers,
Jus' seem to grow, and Everything...'

Anne looked at the stage. If only the old beast wouldn't look at her while he sang those fool words... Thank God the song was over... The Colonel, getting up, unsteady... Standing with his hand up to still the uproar, bowing, pretending that the uproar was for him... He was going to make a speech. Gosh... The ears of the Captain next Anne grew red... Redder... Stuff about what this brave regiment had done in the Great War. Shell fire they'd been under all together... How they'd marched up here. How they'd march right on, by God, to Berlin,– the Colonel paused, waiting for applause. Silence... Anne closed her eyes. Those two dead horses... The others standing, mangy, with their heads down... 'One or two of 'em goes every day now...' Heavy guns, bogged in the field below the canteen...

"March to Berlin!" The Colonel repeated, shaking his clenched

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fist. The soldiers stared, in silence. He switched to the bravery of little girls, who came up here in darkness and in cold to entertain folks... Anne's ears grew red. Gosh... Somebody ought to stop him... After the show, the Colonel went on, the enlisted men would file out in orderly fashion. The officers and the band would stay. There'd be a little dance here... He thanked them,– he waited for the applause.

The soldiers stared a minute. Then they got up, silent, and filed out. Nothin' in Army Reg'lations to make a guy clap...

...

"Do you want to dance?" said Calhoun. "It's so long since I've,–"

"I don't want to, but I suppose I've got to." Anne danced off, smiling. The other Y. girl, dancing with the Major. The twelve junior officers stood round and watched them, their eyes dreamy, distant. There had been a time, when you danced... But now,– afraid to try it...

"Listen, if you want help any time," Calhoun was saying. The Colonel tapped him on the shoulder, his eyes gleaming... "Excuse me, Sir." The Colonel put his arm behind Anne, looking at her. Those eyes,– Ugh! Slowly, deliberately he pressed her body up against his, began to stumble forward... Anne stiffened her left arm. If you held your elbow straight out in front, he couldn't,– God, if she felt again that horrible, soft body... Would this never stop? Would no one break in? She had always thought dancing was just exercise, like tennis... Wondered how anyone could think it wicked... She hadn't felt a man's,– Ugh! Would no one break in? Calhoun, watching, worried... He started forward once, and turned back... Didn't dare to... The music stopped. The Colonel doddered after her toward the wall. They sat down next to a morose young captain.

"I've promised to do the next one with the Captain," Anne said. The Captain turned, looking at her, flushing... The Captain had never danced in his life. He leaped around, his hobnails crushing her toes. Across the Captain's shoulder she saw the Colonel, following, his moist eye glued to her... "You certainly are a sport to come out here," stammered the Captain, "Oh, yes, Sir! Yes, Colonel!" He let go Anne's waist. Thank God, no more dancing... Too bad, though, to have to hand her over to that old rum hound...

Anne danced off. Worse than a bad dream this... That stomach... That,– As she danced past, she poked the Y.M.C.A. man. He had no rank, but would he understand? Ah, thank God, he dashed out, asked if he could cut in. The Colonel, scornful, retiring unsteadily to the saloon door. He'd come back, though... And when he came back, he'd be worse... God...

...

Calhoun dashed up. "You,– you know,–" he began.

"Take me home," said Anne, "quick. We'll walk."

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"Yes, quick, before he comes back,"– Calhoun panting, "where's your coat?"

"Ge' the Colonel's car for you," mumbled the Adjutant. Anne tugged at her arctics. "Jezza minit, jezza minit..."

"No thanks," she said. "I want to walk." Calhoun's hands trembling as he held her fur coat.

"Hurry," he said, "hc's coming!" Anne dodged out through a side door, arctics flapping...

...

The silent moonlight turned the snow pale yellow. Anne ran and slid along the icy road beside Calhoun. 'The God damned old hound!' Calhoun's voice broken, angry...

"Whew!" Anne said. "What an evening!" The road led down across a valley, between wide snow fields. Beyond the fields it rose again, through a cut in the hillside, that made steep banks beside the narrow roadway. The fields on each side stretched, pale spaces of sparkling lemon yellow...

"The old fool's going on his leave tomorrow, thank God," Calhoun turned and looked back. "Good God! He's following us!" Slowly, down the icy town street, the headlights of a Cadillac came bobbing.

"Run," Anne said. "He'll see us if he overtakes us here between these white fields. If we can get to that bank,–" A nightmare race... Her feet slipped on the ice. She panted. Running... Running... 'I'll tell him to go to Hell,–' Calhoun, panting beside her, 'I don't care,–' "Come on, up the bank!" Anne said. "She threw herself at the steep side of the cut, crawled. Hands clutching the snow... Snow biting your bare knees... Knees, pushing... Sliding backwards,– God, the headlights now, touching the snow below you... Climb! Climb! God... She clutched the tall grass at the bank's top, hauled herself up. Calhoun's hands, taking hold of her and shoving. Calhoun's breath, coming in short gasps... Pulling himself up. Both of them rolling across the gleaming snow toward the bushes. Lying there, panting, laughing. Watching the headlights of a car pass and grow smaller...

"We'll walk out to the forest," said Calhoun, "and circle round to your house." He held his hand out, helped her up. And when they got there... Dared he leave her? Have to... Hell... Anne brushed the snow off her coat.

"Gosh," she said, "Gosh."

...

A noise woke her. She sat up in bed. Where was she? Dark... A noise... Oh yes, Ober Kohlstetten... Had walked home under the black shadows of the spruces... 'I don't know what I ought to do about you,' Calhoun kept saying... The handle of the door turned, slowly, slowly... It clicked back. The door was locked. What if the lock broke? She sat there, frozen. The handle turned again. Something scratched against the panel. Anne crept across the floor toward

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the stove, picked up the poker, stood with it, ready. Whang someone on the head with it, if need be... Mustn't make a noise... Not move a muscle until something happened... Again the knob moved. God... Stealthy footsteps, creaking down the hallway... The house door opened. Someone went out, closed it. Anne moved to the shadow by the window. Against the snow she saw the silhouette of a man in uniform who walked past. Disappeared over the hill, toward the town street. Anne went back to bed. She shivered. The sheets were even colder than her feet were...

...

Morning. Sunlight sparkling on the white snow. Beyond it, spruces pointing grimly skyward. Anne shut her window. Last night, – Good God... Better stay in your room. Stick there, till that old beast had left town. Hunger... Your breakfast,– no matter... After ten, you could eat crackers in the canteen... She cracked the ice across her pail's top, poured it into the white china basin...

...

A straight, slim figure stood in the doorway of the canteen. A corporal near the door stood up: 'Ten shun!' he shouted. 'At ease!' The slim figure came toward Anne. Lieutenant Colonel,– he must be back from his leave... "I just wanted to say, Miss Wentworth, that I,– Ah, I hope that everything will be all right while I'm in charge of the regiment," he said.

"Thanks," said Anne. So he had heard already...

"I want to tell you that the men appreciate your work. That the morale is noticeably better."

"Thank you," said Anne. The straight, slim figure went out the door and down the stairway. Shorty leaned on the counter: "He knows his stuff, that guy!"

"Does he?"

"Yeah. And believe me, we'd a been in a pickle in France if he hadn't!"

"Tell me," said Anne. "How did the Colonel get his wound stripe?" Men, pausing over checker boards, raising their eyes from magazines to listen...

"Tony, the tailor, he sewed it on for 'im," said Shorty. The soldiers laughed, and went back to their checkers...

...

Calhoun came in that afternoon, still looking worried. "Come out for a walk with me?" he asked her.

"Can't," said Anne. "I'm strictly on the job now. Have some tea, though?" A trumpet sounded in the street. The soldiers got up, shuffled down the stairway. Calhoun sat, stirring at his tea. How to begin... Got to warn her... Get her away from here before the creature came back... "How did our friend the Colonel get his wound stripe?" Anne asked.

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"Oh, he was driving in his limousine back of the lines. A French 225 went off, and the vibration broke the glass and scratched his forehead. Listen Miss Wentworth, you must,–" Footsteps outside. A woman's voice, talking in shrill American. Her head appeared above the top step, then her shoulders. Stout shoulders, stuffed into a Y.M.C.A. uniform. An elderly woman. She waddled in, smiling, followed by the Reverend Roberts.

"Meet Mrs. Jessie Dodkin," he said. "Mrs. Dodkin's writing a book about us, you know." The Reverend Roberts rubbed his hands, and looked about him.

"Well! What a charming little place!" Mrs. Jessie Dodkin, getting her breath,– "What an atmosphere! Those bright bordered curtains! Those pots of flowers! Those pretty plates against the wall,– Why, I didn't realize the Y. supplied,–"

"I bought them all in Coblenz," said Anne. "Good china is so cheap in Coblenz,–"

"Ahem! Everything going well, I trust?" the Reverend Roberts broke in. "I brought you up some hymn books. We'd,– ah,– like to have you go one day a week to each outlying town, Miss Wentworth, and cheer the boys there. The Major of the Third Battalion will send for you tomorrow evening."

"Ah, how wonderful," said Mrs. Dodkin, "to live in these remote towns! The human contacts! You must find it a real inspiration, Miss Wentworth, to be with all these fine men?" Calhoun, at the table by the window, set his tea down suddenly and walked out.

"Won't you have a cup of tea?" said Anne.

"Why that would be just lovely," said Mrs. Jessie Dodkin...

...

A very young lieutenant, named Smith, called for Anne in a machine-gun truck next evening. The truck bounced through the woods, up, over a range of hills, down to a small town in another valley. It stopped in a dark street. Lieutenant Smith held open a broad door. The room was wide and filled with officers. Smoke swirled against the blackened beams that held the ceiling. The place smelt beery. A lieutenant came forward, unsteadily, holding his hand out. His eyes slunk away from Anne's eyes. "Hello, Bob," said Lieutenant Smith, "how are you?"

"Drunk, as usual,–"

"This way," said Lieutenant Smith to Anne. "We'll find the Major." The Major, a huge, broad-shouldered man, with a red face, stood by the stove, talking to another Y.M.C.A. girl.

"Pleased to see yer," he said. "Hope you'll come an' visit with us often. Les' have some dinner..." Anne sat next the Major at the table, talking primly. Had they a good place for her to work, she asked? 'Work? She wasn't goin' ter work!' The Major brought his fist down on the table. 'Time for that next week. 'F you'll play us a toon,

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Smith, we'll have a lil' dancing.' Smith struck up jazz music. His fingers bounded, flew along the keyboard. 'It's a long way to Berlin, but we'll get there...'

"Will you dance?" A captain seized Anne, and they whirled off. In for it now... There was no canteen to this... Smith, from the piano, looked up at Anne as she whirled past him. Well, he, at least, was absolutely sober... After an hour, the other Y. girl stopped near Anne. She made a little face. "Let's go home," she said.

"Go home?" The Major protesting... Whad'they wanta go home for... Night still young,– Well, if they must go, he'd take 'em... "Smith! Ge' the God damned automobile!" he bellowed. 'I'll see the ladies home, Sir,' Anne heard Smith, timid. 'Long ride, no need for you to go, Sir.' "Jee's Christ," hissed the Major, "who's bossin' this job? You'll come, too, d'you hear. Ge' the automobile. D'you hear?"

"Yes, Sir!" Smith said...

...

"We'll sit in front," the girls said. They jumped in next the soldier at the wheel. "It's warmer,–"

"Wha's the matter? Ain't you comin' in wi' me?" the Major stammered. The soldier grinned, looking straight ahead into the darkness. The car bounced, as the Major sat down on the back seat. Young Smith, sitting next him, banged the door shut. Gears crunched. Chains flapped against the mud guards... 'Wha-as the matter with the God damned girls?' Anne heard behind her. 'Je'es Krise, ain't they,–' 'Less noise, Sir!' Young Smith's voice, sharp, commanding, in the darkness...

"It's pretty country," the other girl said to the chauffeur. 'Jee'es Krise...' The voice trailed off into obscenity. 'Le'go, you dirty,–' Silence. Nothing but silence from the back seat... Occasionally a grunt... Once the driver turned, and looked across his shoulder. Outside the car, the snowy fields rolled past them...

...

The forester's house, at last. Anne got out, slammed the door behind her. 'Good night,' said young Smith, somewhere inside the curtains.

"Good night," Anne said...

...

"Well, what did you think of the Third Battalion?" the Adjutant asked at breakfast. Rum bunch to send a girl to,– The door burst open. The German priest strode in, his cassock flapping, face yellow-white, arms waving: "Dieser Mensch muss fort! This man must go! He can no longer in my house live! The orderly of the Colonel has my sister's daughter,–"

"Quiet, quiet," the Lieutenant Colonel rising, taking the old man's

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arm, patting it, leading him toward the doorway... The priest's black skirts flapping round the Colonel's puttees...

"Four times have I to the Oberst complained! Four times! So long as this man here is, is my niece not safe,–" the door closed.

"Have some more jam, Miss Wentworth?" said the Adjutant.

"Thank you," Anne said...

...

"The Colonel's coming back tomorrow," said Calhoun, "you'd better get out." He strode down the snowy road next Anne, seeing her home from the canteen in his town. "There's going to be a nasty row, – a sentinel got caught the other night, asleep on his post,–"

"Who caught him?"

"I did. I've stayed awake nights since. I couldn't blame the feller,– it was the first time this week that the Officer of the Day'd been sober enough to know whether the guards were asleep or awake,–"

"And you reported him?"

"What could I do? The whole guard saw me catch him. Somebody's got to keep the discipline in this bunch,– it's bad enough now, God knows. You'd better get out."

"But if I can help the morale?" said Anne.

"Look here!" The young man stood still in the road beside her. "You've *got* to go. You know what the old man is. You saw. The day you came up here, twenty officers rode over to tell McIlarney he ought to tip you off to get out. The officers may drink and raise Hell generally,– when the C.O.'s a rotter it always goes down through,– but they know that town's no place for a decent woman to be in. Promise me you'll go!" He looked down at her. He'd be lonely enough without her, God knew...

"Well, I'll think about it," she said...

...

A quitter... Anne plodded slowly past the picket line to supper. A failure... How could you explain this mess to old man Roberts? The Lieutenant Colonel silent, all through supper. "May I speak to you a minute?" he called after her as she went out. She turned. 'Yes?' "I want to thank you for what you've done here." He stood, stiff, solemn. "I want to suggest that, that,– it would be a good idea for you to do the same work for some other outfit,–" He looked at her. Would she get that? Would she understand that this was all he,–

"Thank you," said Anne, "I see."

...

In the road Captain Trent of A Battery, getting off his horse, and leading it beside her. "How is everything?" Blue eyes, searching her eyes... She had been to his town twice. He had told her he had a billet for her, with a nice old lady, if ever she wanted to move...

"The Colonel's coming back tomorrow," Anne said.

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"H'mp!" A little scowl crossed the Captain's straight brow.

"Tell me honestly what you think of him," Anne said. She met the blue eyes.

"I wouldn't let my wife go in the same house with him," said the Captain.

"Thanks," said Anne. She held her hand out. "Good-bye..."

...

The canteen. Men, sitting, watching her light the candles. Tomorrow evening nobody'd light the candles... Men wouldn't do things like that for themselves... They'd sit in a street, in a saloon, anywhere where there was light already... And warmth. She put wood in the stove. Men, sitting round it, talking... Pleasant, helpless... Men, great children, really... She wouldn't tell them she was going in the morning... Just slip away in the Y. truck, early... 'But Miss Wentworth, I thought you were getting on so well up there,–' old Roberts' voice had been very distant on the telephone... 'I was, But I must have a truck at seven,' she'd said... Hemholtz tipped his chair back, watching her, as she straightened up the table.

"Say," he said, "This town certainly has cheered up since you come..."

...

The white hills sliding past as the truck coasted... Rain, dripping on the snow... The snow all soft and soggy... Small rivers in the white ruts of the roadway. The Ford truck slewing... Anne grasped the upright. Failure... Ought to have stayed and lived the man down... Coward... And yet,– that gleaming, moistening eye... That stomach, pressing,– God! The officers would be glad to know she had gone. The men,– they'd think her a deserter... A person who, with infinite trouble, had won them to a new way, and then let them down. They'd look in tonight, and then go back to throwing glasses at Suzanna. Mist, rising from the valley... Mist, enveloping the robber baron's castle...

...

Anne climbed the hill, stood with her back against the robber's broken, grey wall. Below, through tracery of twigs, she could see the Y.M.C.A. Headquarters, in the village. Inside, about the stove, Brother Brown and Brother Tompkins would still be talking of how she'd failed up yonder... The Reverend Roberts, still shaking his old head... 'The flesh is weak,' he'd told her, and from his look, she hadn't been sure whether he'd meant her flesh, or the Colonel's... 'Help us out of our difficulties, Father,' he had prayed at luncheon. You had to help yourself... No one would help you...

The snow, melting... Rain dripping on the damp white. Drops glistening on the twigs. Anne looked up at the ancient, crumbling wall above her. What did failure matter? Everyone failed... The robber barons failed, in the end, and passed... Americans, here in

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their mountain stronghold for a moment, would fail and pass... She scraped up a pile of wet snow between her arctics. Still, it was rotten to try your best, and then fail. Fail... Fail... Feet cold, better move on. Nothing to see here, but a huge fireplace perched high up there on the stone wall, and holes where the beams that held the floor were once supported. People once had stood before that fireplace, on that floor. A dead fireplace now, without fire. She walked out through a gothic archway down through the snow among the bushes. Failure... Failure... A bitter taste, that clung...

...

A new girl was sitting in Anne's billet when she got back. Just come from America, she explained, breathless, and been sent out from Coblenz today and in Coblenz they'd kept her waiting a whole week, and she'd thought that with the army things would move fast,– Anne smiled. 'Why, they tell me you girls are doing such fine work up here...' Anne threw herself on the bed, pulling her hat off. Why did they send girls up here who knew nothing... The new girl watched her, eager.

"Do they?" she said...

...

Anne opened her eyes early. The new girl, tiptoeing about the room, packing her suit case. The new girl was being sent out to a job. "Good-bye," Anne said. "Good luck to you! You need it!" The new girl jumped, looked at her. "Say, have you got any advice to give me?" she said. That Y. girl's eyes awfully sad, somehow... "Yes," said Anne, "Don't ride in an automobile with anything above the rank of Captain." The new girl's eyes widening as she picked her bag up... "Oh," she said. "Oh."

...

Breakfast. Another day of waiting to be got through... 'Our Father,' said old Roberts, 'we ask Thee to make our work efficient...' Good God, if only they wouldn't waste twenty minutes every morning... Anne shoved her chair back, walked out into the street. Snow melting, pouring rivulets toward the river... A motor-cycle stuck in the mud, the soldier driver tinkering, and a lieutenant watching. He looked up. Lieutenant Smith,– "Aren't you a long way from home?" he said.

"I've deserted," Anne said.

"Good!" said Smith. He came slopping through the slush toward the sidewalk. "You know, I wondered how long you'd be able,– You see, there's nothing to do up there, and liquor's so cheap. And the Colonel,– By the way, I apologize for not getting out the other night when we took you home, but the Major,–"

"I know," said Anne. "How did you make him shut up?"

The young man flushed, embarrassed. Well,– she knew,– "Sat there with my two hands round his throat," he said. "'Sir,' I said,

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'if the Major makes any more noise, I shall be obliged to choke him.' Every time he began to sound off, I began to squeeze,–"

"How did you dare?" Young Smith, so small, so pink and white...

"There's such a thing as being drunken and disorderly in uniform," he said. "The Major knows that."

"Car's ready, Sir!" The driver, standing stiff, saluting. Anne shook Smith's hand. Above his curly head, the mediæval castle, looming. She pointed to it.

"There used to be knights who went out slaying dragons for the ladies," she said. He laughed as the motor-cycle sputtered, jolted forward. 'Say, that would be fine, if you could slay 'em!' he called...

...

The Ford truck stopped. The town was perched on a high ridge, looking down on either side into a broad valley. Hills gleamed purple beyond white, snow-filled spaces. On the street a row of Gasthouses, and a few shops. Anne jumped out. That big saloon on the corner would make a fine canteen... A Y.M.C.A. man came out of the hotel next door. She was to take his place. "We don't have any regular canteen,"– he led her toward Headquarters,– "I have a corporal who sells cigarettes over in the big hall where the men do their athletics. Ahem. Colonel, meet Miss Wentworth!" The Colonel rose, setting his heels together. A slender, hard man, with a keen eye. Pleased, he was sure... Anne held her hand out. Nothing maudlin about this one... She'd be all right here...

"Orderly! Take Miss Wentworth to the Billeting Officer!" The Colonel watched her walk out. Damn these women...

...

Frau Schmidt was a pleasant widow with a pink face. She smiled and bowed and showed Anne to her room,– a sunny room with green plants in the window. Spotless white curtains, a green china stove that gave forth pleasant warmness. Frau Schmidt would be glad to cook the Fräulein's breakfast each day, if the Fräulein would but furnish her the bread, the coffee. Eggs? It was verboten eggs to sell. But,– the Frau blushed, laughing. "Man can a hen rent, Fräulein." Fine,– Anne laughed,– she would rent a hen, then. The rent? A cake of soap each week, a candle... Fine. "Danke schön!" "Bitte sehr, mein Fräulein..." Anne closed the door behind her. How very good to find a kindly woman...

...

The Colonel's mess. Fifteen officers who all stood, waiting. The Colonel strode in quickly, stiff, straight. Miss Wentworth had met everybody? Ah, fine, let's begin. Miss Wentworth part of the day's work... Chairs clattering. The Colonel turning the conversation to artillery... Controlling the conversation. Orderlies, watching the new Y. girl as they passed things... A proper mess, this... Thank God...

...

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Night. Anne sat up in bed. Queer, the windows were in a new place... Where was she? Ah, that new billet... The good Frau Schmidt, sleeping across the hall with her two children. 'If you in the night anything want, need you only to knock,' she had said. Anne turned over, comfortably. One could sleep here...

...

Music, crashing through darkness, driving away sleep. Outside the open window, the first grey of morning... The band, marching up and down the town street, the Reveille March soaring, louder, louder as it came near, jarring the window, passing, passing, growing distant ... Even the Colonel, the Billeting Officer had told Anne, had his breakfast at six...

...

The Colonel rode up to Regimental Headquarters, jumped off, tossed his bridle to the orderly, walked toward the door with a nervous, quick step. Hell, here was that Y.M.C.A. girl... 'I wondered,–' she said... "Good morning," said the Colonel. Damn these women...

"I wondered if I could speak to you about a room to open a canteen in?"

"Yes, yes. Haven't got one available right now, but I'll look into it, glad to! You ride, Miss Wentworth?" 'I can,' Anne hesitated. Hadn't come here on a vacation... "I'll have a horse and orderly reserved for you,– send him round to your billet at two." The Colonel saluted, passed on. That ought to keep her quiet...

"Thank you," Anne said...

...

Anne sat in her billet. Nothing to do,– except digest that huge lunch... She lit a cigarette. A failure, again... Hoofs on the crisp snow,– a horse sneezed. 'Whoa!' said a man's voice outside. Anne looked down from the window. A soldier stood, holding the bridles of two saddle-horses. She laughed. 'It's a great war!'

...

She rode through the town, out toward the road along the high ridge. The horse, moving sideways, in little, prancing jumps... Your thighs tightening to his sides... Calves pressing... Hand, patting the shiny, brown neck... Life, good... She pulled in, waiting for the orderly. He stopped and waited. "I go four paces behind yer," he called. Hell, the soldiers'd kid him worse'n ever if he rode next her... Anne laughed. She pressed her horse's flanks, loosening the reins. He sprang into a canter. Legs, close to his sides... Back and shoulders moving easy to the rhythm... Anne threw her head back. Wind in your face... And the world at your feet...

...

"Will you ride with me today?" The Lieutenant-Colonel too, it seemed, had nothing to do in this town...

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"Do you think I'll have a place for a canteen soon?" Anne asked, as they jogged out through the fields, their horses side by side, the orderlies behind them.

"The trouble is, there's only one room in the town that's empty. We've used that for a morgue,– some soldiers died of the flu when we first came up. Look, there's a ruined castle on that hill there. Let's go and see that."

"Yes," said Anne. "Let's."

...

Anne walked past the saloon toward her billet. "Coo-Hoo!" called a soldier from a window. God damn girl comin' up here, doin' nothin... Anne walked quicker. Hot blood flooding her cheeks... She'd leave... She'd go away... Damn them... And yet, you couldn't blame the soldiers,– you'd been here a week and so far had done nothing. Except ride, with the Lieutenant-Colonel, each day. No wonder the soldiers thought she was a gold brick... Slowly she climbed the stairs of the good widow Schmidt's house. The soldiers worked,– the Colonel kept them busy painting guns and grooming horses... No mangy horses,– not here... The Colonel was always busy himself. Always made her feel she interrupted when she came to ask for some place where she could start a canteen. 'Yes, yes,' he'd say, 'I'll see what we can do tomorrow. Glad to!' Anne stood, back to her china stove. Better go... Go,– and be a failure again? 'That girl can't hold a job down. She quits,–' She shut her teeth hard. She'd stay... She'd stay no matter if she never got a canteen...

"Fräulein!" Frau Schmidt stood in the doorway, radiating kindness. "Underneath waits a Herr Hauptmann,–" 'Who?' Anne followed Frau Schmidt, slowly. A slender man sat on a tall, chestnut horse, wearing a much-washed trench coat. He got down, when he saw Anne, taking his cap off. He looked down at her. Why, this girl was lonely...

"I'm Captain Davis," he said. "I've come to ask if,– if you'll come over to dinner with us in the next town,–" Clear, grey eyes, searching his eyes...

Anne shook his hand. A man you could trust... A civilized man... Thank God...

"Why yes," she said. "I'd like to."

...

He'd sent away his horse when she came down. "We'll walk," he said. "It's just over the hill, there." He strode beside her, silent. A woman... Forgotten how much you really longed for women...

"Tell me," Anne looked up at him,– you didn't need to beat about the bush with this man,– "Why don't they give me a place for a canteen?" she said. "Is it because they don't want me to stay here?" He smiled and shook his head.

"The Colonel doesn't approve of 'Welfare Workers.' He thinks

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war is,– a man's game. Thinks if you keep soldiers busy enough, they don't get homesick. He's a damn good officer, you know, the Colonel! What does he say when you ask him for a canteen?"

"'Tomorrow,–'"

The Captain laughed. "Yes, that's his way. He's a diplomat, too. But you stay! If he won't give you a place, I'll give you one in my town." He watched her profile, moving against the roadside. Tears, suddenly, in her eyes... "The boys," he said, "have made a special cake in honor of your coming." She smiled, quickly...

"Thanks," she said, "thanks."

...

Anne walked out along the road next morning. Even nice captains did not make up for no work... She had tried selling cigarettes in the athletic hall last night. The men who had been boxing, came out, glistening with sweat, their noses bloody... Looking at her, surprised. The Lieutenant who directed the athletics looked at her, surprised. The Corporal, when he found her there, looked at her, surprised... They didn't want her... She strode on. A lovely day... Sun melting the snow on the south banks... German children, straggling home from school along the roadway... They poked each other, whispered: 'Hier kommt das Himmel-Mädchen!' [1] "Guten Tag!" Anne said.

"Guten Tag, Fräulein!" came the shrill, high voices. Anne took a roll of cookies from her pocket. She gave them each one. They poked each other, giggling. "Danke sehr, Fräulein." A little girl stood, her pink face shining, hand twisting her apron. "Ich bin alt, Fräulein," she said, "Ten years old. I can still remember white bread. But Lenchen, here, and Hansche, they have never white bread seen! They know not what it is. So these sweet cakes," she bit her cooky, smiling, "they taste to us *sehr* gut!"

"Why do you call me Himmel-Mädchen?" Anne asked. The children giggled, crumbs sticking to their chins.

"Sind Sie denn keins?" [2] they answered...

...

A heavy limousine stopped in the road behind her. She heard its door open. 'Can I give you a lift?' A pleasant voice... Anne turned. Heavens, the limousine had stars... Must be the General... "Thank you," she said. She got in. "I'm Miss Wentworth."

"Ah, yes. I heard that you were up here. I'm General Foster. This is Captain Harrington. Delighted to have you up here. We want to have a good canteen within reach of every soldier in the Division. Are they giving you everything you want, Miss Wentworth?"

"The Colonel hasn't had a chance to find a room for a canteen yet, but then," Anne said, "I've only been here ten days. Isn't this lovely country, General?"– looking out the smooth, plate-glass window.

[1] 'Heaven Maiden.' [2] 'Are you then not?'

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"Pretty a country as I've ever seen," said the aide, on the small seat. The General was staring at the back of the chauffeur's neck...

...

"I believe I've got a room for your canteen, Miss Wentworth," said the Colonel that night. "Could you come with me a minute after supper?" "That's fine!" said Anne. Wished the old meal was over... The meal, overshadowed by the General's visit. The General wanted this, the General wanted that... Tomorrow, they'd do,– Everyone a little nervous and upset except the Chaplain. He sat, smiling. Nobody ever wanted him to do anything, and he never did it... He had a good billet, and he sat in it, even on Sundays...

...

Anne walked down the town street with the Colonel. You had to walk fast... Heavens, where was he going? This was the last house... "This is the only room we have." The Colonel pushed open a door of a German Gasthof. On the left, a cheery beer saloon, a low room, filled with soldiers. On the right he opened a door into a small, dark place. A smell of last year's beer, and mouldy plaster... Plaster falling off, and crumbling in a damp pile... The men would never come here,– you had to spin your web on sunny corners... "It's,– it's rather small, isn't it?" said Anne.

"Yes, yes, of course. Later I'm sure we'll find you something better. But for the present,–" The Colonel looked at her. How long would it take this woman to find out that his men had no desire to drink cocoa?

"Yes, this will do finely for the present," Anne said...

...

Soapy water, slopping on walls. A great brush, scrubbing at dingy thumb marks... Water, dribbling down, across damp, dirty floor boards... That smell of beer,– Anne scrubbed. Skin on her fingers getting all wrinkled up from so much water... Hands cold and slimy... Beside her scrubbed Johanna, a broad-hipped German girl whom she had hired. Water, in the pail, getting blacker, blacker... Only way to get more was for Johanna to walk the whole length of the town with two pails. Johanna did not mind that,– were there not soldiers? Johanna barely touched the cake of yellow soap with her brush. 'More soap, Johanna! More soap!'

"Ach, Fräulein!" Johanna shook her broad face. "Pity, so much beautiful soap to waste!" she said...

...

Spine, like a sharp spike of pain, inside you... Anne dragged her feet upstairs toward her billet. Mustn't be ill... Must keep going... Shivering,– how that damp, unheated room could chill you... Anne's own room, warm and pleasant. Frau Schmidt, smiling, bringing you 'Heisses Wasser' and wood for the green stove. Your clothes, damp and soapy... Hot water pleasant as you squeezed it down that

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lame back... Have to get dressed... Go over to the Colonel's mess for supper...

...

"I believe you have a fever." The Regimental Surgeon, waiting for supper, looked at her, sharply. He laid his hand against her forehead. "You go back to your billet and go to bed," he was saying... "I'll bring you over aspirin." Anne stumbled along the dark path. Wonder if you can get there... What would happen to you if you got sick, alone with just the army and the Germans? Head, feeling awfully funny... Back aching, aching... God, to be at home... Home...

"Ist das Fräulein krank?" Frau Schmidt's pink face was anxious. "I thought already that the Fräulein felt herself not well." She hurried upstairs before Anne. She would fetch hot water for her bottle,– put her to bed, zo... The Fräulein would feel better in bed, zo... One minute, and she would make more fire, zo... She would put another blanket over her, zo... Too bad that the Fräulein had to work so hard in the room back of Müller's! In that room had lately two Amerikanische soldaten corpses been laid,– the Germans would not that room for this reason any more use... 'Can I come up?' called the Regimental Surgeon from the stairway.

"Yes, come up," Anne said...

...

Fever, burning... Back aching, aching... It must be morning. Eyes, too heavy to look up... Frau Schmidt's kind face, bending over the bed, smoothing the sheets, the pillow... Too tired, even to smile... "Sind Sie nicht einsam, Fräulein?" Lonely? Silly tears, welling in one's eyes... Frau Schmidt's kind face, swimming... One's enemy... Anne turned her face toward the white wall.

"Nein," she said...

...

Four days. Then Anne woke up one morning, feeling better. Hungry... Oranges,– that was what you wanted,– Something acid, – two years since you'd had oranges. The door opened. Frau Schmidt's face, smiling above the great tray she carried. "Today goes it better with you, Fräulein, nicht wahr? Today have you appetite! Here are strawberries, Fräulein, from last summer. And your hen has today an egg gelegt!" She bent over, patting Anne's pillows. Anne ate a strawberry, strangely preserved, without sugar. A tart, fresh taste,– a taste that you had longed for... 'Ah, you are too good to me, Frau Schmidt!' The woman stood at the bed's foot, watching Anne eat.

"Today, a year ago," she said, "has my Mann fallen." Anne looked up, quickly. Her husband... The children had showed Anne small bears, carved out of wood, that he had made them, had told her how he used to take them walking of a Sunday, and how he loved the forest. "Where?" said Anne, "tell me." Tears in Frau Schmidt's eyes...

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"The Americans have shot him, bei Toul. It was when the Americans first came there. Our soldiers had not yet learned that the Americans fought like the Germans. They were not careful enough at first. Ach, Fräulein, it is not right that we two should kill each other! We, who are so much alike, nicht wahr?"

"No, it is not right," said Anne. "But Frau Schmidt, I,– we thought that Germany wanted this war,–"

"But not the German people, Fräulein! We wanted war not! Ach, war is not good!" She picked up the tray.

"No," said Anne, "War is not good."

...

The Lieutenant-Colonel came to call. He brought her novels. Her horse, he said, was getting restless for her. "But I'm going to work," she told him, "when I get up..." He smiled. Queer, how important women thought they were in this war... Captain Davis came: "I wonder if I'll be a nuisance?" He stood, cap in hand, in the doorway. He came in, sat down. He pulled a small book out of his pocket, – Browning's poems. "I always lug 'em with me," he said shyly, "thought you might like 'em." The Mess Sergeant came, bringing Anne's rations to Frau Schmidt. He came in, sat down. "Say, somehow you remind me of my wife," he told Anne...

...

Anne walked toward the new room. Well again, yet still a little flabby... It had been hard to get this canteen furnished. At last the Lieutenant-Colonel had taken her to a horse show down in Coblenz,– not sure he'd liked it when she stayed away two hours, shopping... 'Coo-Hoo!' a soldier, calling from a window... 'Who won the Wa-ar?' another... Anne walked past. She felt her color rising. A soldier lurched out of a barroom, straight before her. 'Hello,' he drawled, 'Say, woncher,–' Anne walked fast. Better get on before he should say something,– The soldier shuffling along behind her. Better look the other way, not see him, gaze with enormous interest at the houses... Not at that one,– a large Red Cross hung in the window,– it didn't do to gaze at prophylactic stations...

She opened the canteen door. A soldier sat on a table, talking to Johanna. Johanna blushing... The soldier slipped down, slunk away when Anne came in. Anne made cocoa. She listened to footsteps going into the saloon across the hallway. Outside the window, she watched the sunset glowing through the beech woods. Might have gone riding... Place was quite, quite empty...

...

Evening. She lit the candles, had hot cocoa ready. A soldier, coming from the Müllers' kitchen, looked in the doorway, then walked into the saloon opposite and banged the door shut. Through the saloon door, Anne could hear men laugh. An hour passed. Another... In the street a bugle sounded tattoo. Would the canteen at Avency

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still be crowded? First call, clear, lingering... The soldiers in the saloon opposite shuffled out. Anne heard the barmaid squeal and giggle. She carried her cocoa to the German kitchen. 'The Amerikaners drink too many kinds of wine,' Frau Müller was complaining, to her daughter, 'it is because they mix their wines, they get so drunken...' "'N'abend, Fräulein! Cocoa? Ach, for the children it is sehr gut! Danke sehr, Fräulein!"

"I'll come for the empty can tomorrow," Anne said...

...

"Now I have a canteen, and they won't one of them come inside it!" Anne said. She loosed her horse's bridle, sitting tight while his trot slowed to a walk. "I'll *have* to go, now!"

"Don't!" Captain Davis slowed his horse beside her. "Try it a while longer. It's a sort of general bad morale," he scowled a little. "You know, there's a rumor that the Division's going home soon, but that we artillery regiments are going to be left behind. That makes the men sore. That's why they drink and all that. And you,–"

"Yes?" said Anne, "I what?"

"You make 'em homesick. I can't tell you what it's like,– to suddenly see an American girl after six months of,– of the other. You remind 'em of home, and then they hear on top of that that they're not going. They say 'Oh Hell, we'll show her!'" Anne pressed her horse's sides, jiggled the reins. He sprang into a canter.

"So that's it," she said...

...

Evening. Some soldiers came into the canteen, their hobnails scuffing. They paid for cocoa, sat down. "Say," said one suddenly, "Our Top Kick's got a present for yer. Real cute it is, too!" The five laughed, harshly. Anne watched them, quiet. Not a friend among them... "He's goin' to bring it up tonight," said the first one. He watched the window. This God damn girl, comin' up here and ridin' wid orficers, and doin' nothin'... Jes' let her see what kinda plugs the God damned soldiers rode on... "Say, buddy," said the second soldier, "How jer like yer cocoa? Good as beer, even if it does cost twict as much? They ain't tryin' to make no money in this Y.M.C.A. Lord, No!"

Anne shoved wood in the stove. She'd go tomorrow... No cure for this toughness... 'These men' the Colonel had said with pride, 'are *soldiers*.' You could work with men, but not with '*soldiers*'... A commotion in the street outside... 'Jees Christ, look out fer his heels...'

"Come out!" they said. "See what the Top Kick's got." She followed them out through the beery entry. The men in the saloon opposite were coming. A huge horse stood outside the door beside the curbstone. Its flanks were shining, its mane tied with blue ribbons, its hoofs well oiled. The white of the horse's eye gleamed as he looked

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back. A sergeant with a red, pock-marked face, stood holding the horse's bridle. He began talking as Anne came out. The boys knowed she was awful fond o' ridin'... But they thought she'd never seen a real hoss... They'd brought her up this little one so's she could try him... Anne watched the great horse. Men snickering behind her... 'Aw, cut that out' said someone...

"Just lead him over to my billet, will you?" she said. "I'll put my riding skirt on." Sergeant Malloy watched the slender, blue-aproned figure walking across the street. Hell, the girl couldn't be goin' to really ride him? Not that great wheeler... Christ, she'd get killed an' then the Colonel,– 'You ain't scart, are you Malloy?' said a soldier. The Sergeant dragged at the big horse. 'Come on, you God damn son of a bitch!' There was the girl, standing there, with her spurs on... Say,– 'Just put your hand out, Sergeant,' she said. Her foot in his hand... 'Thanks!' She was up. Tightening the reins, prodding the God damn,– The horse stuck out its neck, sawed at the bit with tough jaws. It gave a wallop with its heels toward the Sergeant. A loud laugh from the soldiers... 'You tell him, Sarge!' they shouted. The great horse rammed his head down and began to gallop...

...

Anne sat, pounding, thudding, as the horse hit the hard road. As if one were straddling an elephant... As if both legs must break off... No springs in this horse. He just stiffened all his legs and came down. Bang, bang... Joggled your teeth together... Surely your insides would,– No use to pull him... He rolled his eye at you, lashed out with his heels. Just hold on, and let him pound you... At last, on an up-slope, he panted, trying to slow down. Anne hit him with the whip, and drove her spurs in. Tire him out... Show these damn soldiers... Pound, pound... Your legs splitting... Your back,– The horse stopped, head down, panting, sweating. She turned him round. He walked back, slowly, head down..

...

The Sergeant spat and strolled back toward the soldiers standing on the sidewalk. Damn girl had been gone ten minutes... What if the God damn hoss mangled her up like he done Murphy? What if he killed her? Never thought she'd try to get on the damn brute... 'Ready to spend the night in the jug, Malloy?' The soldiers laughed, shifting from one foot to the other on the sidewalk. 'They string up soldiers for murder, I heard...' 'Or send 'em to Leavenworth fer life,–' 'Say, buddy, git the Amb'lance, we might need it...'

"Shut your God damn mouth, will yer?" snapped the Sergeant. Where wuz the damn girl? Christ, there wuz a General's car, drawin' up outside her billet, waitin',– if anythin' happened to her tonight, you'd hang... Malloy spat in the gutter. God damned hoss was prob'ly rollin' on her right now... Never'd a fetched the beast up, if you'd knowd she'd ride him... No accountin' fer these God damn

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women... He turned. There she come now,– pray God she'd keep a loose rein on him, git him back straight! That there Colonel in the staff car, settin', waitin'...

The great horse trotted slowly, and on its back Anne posted. She pulled up before the group outside the canteen. The soldiers stood there, silent. Watchin' the girl set there, easy 's if she liked it... Pattin' the God damn crittur on his fat neck... On-tyin' one o' them fool ribbons, tyin' it in her button-hole in a bow, like... Gettin' down, standin' beside him, strokin' his shoulder... Old Malloy's face turnin' white an' speckled like it uster in France... Showin' hisself up fer what he wuz, a God damn coward an' a bully... Tryin' ter hurt a young girl,– well, she'd showed him!

"Thank you." She tossed the bridle to the Sergeant. "I had a great ride." Anne walked toward her billet. Fifteen soldiers, silent, watching your back... Go slow, don't let them see how much your legs hurt... God, would you ever be anything but bow-legged? Swing your whip, easy, as if you'd had a swell time... Why, there was a car,– Good God, she was going to a dance at the General's, she'd forgotten... 'So sorry to keep you waiting! Yes, just a minute, Colonel, I'll be ready.' She rushed upstairs...

The soldiers outside the canteen turned on their heels. Say, she was a sport, that girl... Had nerve... And that there was the General's car a waitin' for her... She'd kep' a colonel a settin' there, coolin' his heels... Some girl, that could hand-shake with the General...

...

A grizzled-haired, middle-aged woman in a Y. uniform sat in the motor. The Colonel introduced her as Miss Shanks who had a canteen in a town five miles east. The limousine rolled forward. "Isn't it just *lovely* to be starting for a dance?" Miss Shanks wriggled back pleasantly into the soft cushions. After you'd taught school all your life,– never had enough money to ride even in a taxi,– to have a staff car call for you, and take you... To have been a homely girl, who never danced much, even long ago, and now, to find yourself sought after, jazzing... This new girl, neat and tailored in her uniform, her new collar,– no temptation to her apparently, to just stick on a little lace one for the party... Miss Shanks looked at the reflection of her little lace one in the smooth glass. "Don't you *love* dances?" she said.

"What?" said Anne, "oh, yes. Sure."

...

Anne sat in an armchair, by the fire, talking to General Foster. Nice, quiet, kindly gentleman, this General... "You really think the artillery wants to go home, then?" he asked. Queer, what this girl said about their being homesick... Regimental commanders all implied they'd be glad to stay over... Better job for regimental commanders, staying over,– more pay,– Took an exceptional officer to really find out what the men thought. Morale, ticklish business...

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These girls might help,– The music stopped. Miss Shanks came in, breathless, cheeks flushed, eyes glistening, followed by the General's aide and sat down on the sofa. 'Such *lovely* music...'

"Don't you think we'd better be starting home?" Anne asked her, "we've got twenty miles,–"

"Oh, yes, but I've promised the next dance to the Colonel. After that, perhaps,–" She flitted off, talking. What a killjoy this new girl was... Ah, there was the dear Colonel, looking for her... Her, whom nobody had ever looked for... A middle-aged school teacher,– But now, a princess... Princess... She touched the Colonel's shoulder, lightly. He put his arm about her. They leapt off, jiggling. He tightened his arm, pressed her stiff, corsetted figure to him. She closed her eyes. 'What *lovely* music,' she said...

The music stopped. Miss Shanks gasped. Suppose he really *had* to let go... There was the new girl, with Captain Harrington, standing, waiting. 'Ready to go, now?' The new girl, yawning... Bother... Miss Shanks took out her handkerchief and mopped her damp brow,– how did these young girls manage to keep their faces smooth and powdery,– 'I've promised the Colonel just *one* more,' she was saying...

"Oh, all right," Anne said...

...

The music stopped again. Miss Shanks and the Colonel stopped, slowly, like figures on a music box that had run down. That bothersome new girl was standing with her coat on, and her arctics... Have to go this time... The Colonel, touching her arm, making her suddenly go hot and cold all over... "I'll get that map I promised to you," he said. "Oh," Miss Shanks blushed. "Colonel, you are *so* sweet..."

"Come on," Anne said...

...

The limousine stopped before the church up in Miss Shanks' town. The Colonel grunted, leaned forward, opened the door. Better leave this one first, the other one was safer... "See you to the door," he said. Anne watched them walk up a path, disappear round the corner of the church. The soldier-chauffeur fumbled with the blanket. "What's this?" He held up a roll of paper.

"Oh that's Miss Shanks' map. Here, I'll take it." Anne made her way up the dark pathway, round the corner, stood there in the three-cornered shadow of the church tower. Which house? Ah, there was somebody by the door,– Somebody,– two people... A man and woman, kissing... Anne dropped the map and fled around the corner. She got into the car, sat, silent.

"Nice night fer waitin'," said the soldier at last...

...

Briskly the Colonel came and took his place beside Anne. The

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limousine purred forward. "Let me see," Anne said, "you said your wife was in Washington, didn't you Colonel?"

"She's moved to Baltimore. My two kids are at school."

"Oh, yes, of course. You told me. You must miss them," said Anne. The Colonel coughed. "Yes, of course! Yes..."

...

"You puttin' out cocoa?" The soldiers who had come the evening before stood in the doorway. This here girl had turned the tables on the Top Kick... Anybody try to get fresh with her, they'd,—

"Yes, and I've got some fudge here," said Anne. "Come in. Do you like fudge?" Grins on their faces,— the sheepish grins of children. The toughness vanished... 'I'll tell the world we like it...' They pulled chairs out... Two sergeants, passing the open window, looked in. 'That girl in there, she turned the laugh on old Malloy last night. Say, let's,—' They came in, nonchalant. "Have some candy?" Anne said.

"Say, that tastes like home..."

"You may be going home before long," Anne said. "I was talking to the General last night,—"

"Say!" The Sergeants pulled out chairs and sat down. This girl might have some real dope... God damn these soldiers comin' in and askin' her for cocoa... Why in Hell had everybody took to drinkin' cocoa? Could get good beer at half the price of cocoa! Like to talk to this girl, but there weren't no chanst, with all these God damn soldiers...

...

The Colonel walked down the street, stiff, military, nervous. Energy in every step,— the men were watching... Corner saloon, soldiers, drinking, in it. Guard by the counter to see the barmaid didn't sell 'Schnaps.' Beer and light wine,— did 'em no harm,— kept 'em happy... Door of the German Hall, with soldiers boxing in it, under the supervision of an officer. Give 'em enough physical exercise, and keep 'em tough,— that was the idea... Corporal, assistant to the Y. girl, selling tobacco in the corner. Army ought to have kept its own canteens, ought never to have turned 'em over to a bunch of inefficient, God-hopping ministers to run in wartime... Infirmary and prophylactic station. Keep the men's health good and keep disease off,— British and French lost more from disease than from wounds they say,— Another saloon... German houses. 'Guten Abend, Herr Oberst!' A German's hat off. Proper... Another saloon, — this one almost empty... The guard at the counter pulling the barmaid's ear, and kissing,— Next window the Y.M.C.A. girl's canteen,— couldn't help it if the soldiers didn't go there... Hardened artillerymen would never want to go there,— he'd intimated as much to the General...

Great God! The Colonel paused a second before the window. Why, the God damned place was full of soldiers! He strode on. Sergeants,

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– in there... And soldiers, crowded, drinking cocoa out of white mugs... Bah! Thought he'd made real soldiers out of these damned civilians... Hadn't... Couldn't,– not with an American girl messing round, reminding them of,– "Lieutenant!" he said. The Officer of the Day jumped, saluted. 'Yes, Sir...' "You'll see that that canteen is closed at quarter of ten, sharp!"

"Yes, Sir," said the Lieutenant...

...

"Well, you win!" Davis jogged beside Anne on his tall horse. The wind blew in their faces. The pungent smell of earth was all about them. "It worked like a miracle," said Davis. "Men are walking in from the outlying batteries just to look at you."

"What worked like a miracle?" Anne reined her horse in, patted the sleek neck. The man's eyes,– something new in them,– Admiration... Perfectly tempered, perfectly controlled...

"Your riding that old wheel-horse. Those were my men that brought him up. If I'd known they were going to I'd have,–"

"Stopped them. And they'd be hating me worse than ever." Anne picked a beech bud, chewed it.

"Whereas now," Davis looked at her. Spring... Newness in the air... A girl,– "All of us down there think you made the world and own it." The girl chirped to her horse, tightened her knees.

"Except the Sergeant," she said...

...

An automobile bowled forward into a wet, March snowstorm. On its back seat Miss Shanks crouched next Anne. They had been ordered to a dance up on the outposts. Driving flakes stung their faces, swirling in from darkness. The car stopped in a tiny town perched on a hillside. In the dark street soldiers crossed the headlights. 'The Y.M.C.A. girl? Sure. I'll go git her...' A girl came through the whirling snowflakes, got in beside them. "My," she said, "but it's nice to see another woman!" The car plunged into whirling whiteness.

"You know your way?" Anne called to the driver.

"No, Ma'am," the soldier flung back...

...

Anne blinked. Light, after peering for two hours into snowy darkness... The dance was in the refectory of a German convent. So they took over convents... Soldiers crowded, pushing toward a small space in the middle... In that space soldiers dancing madly, one with another... Among them, two girls in uniform, bobbing, disappearing, appearing... 'Say, I got one!' A soldier grabbed Anne by the shoulder, pulled her through the crowd of others, put his arm around her, danced, puffing fiercely. Behind her back she felt his great arm tremble. A whistle blew. Soldiers pressed, grabbing, struggling. Four men's hands on her... 'She's mine!' 'I got her first!' Strange fierce-

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ness in their eyes... 'Come on! Hurry! We only got two minutes...' A man grabbed her round the waist and danced off. His hobnails, cutting her shoes... Sweat, spattering from his brow, hitting her face... From the walls the mild faces of the Holy Family looked down.

The man's breath coming in long snorts, making his nostrils dilate... A shout. The man dropped her, stood, frozen, arms by his side. A soldier. The strange fierceness that filled the whole, hot, crowded place hung, suspended. The men stood at attention. A colonel strode out into the space among them. '... whole building rocking,' he was saying. He held his arms out. "Everyone behind me downstairs! March!" The soldier next Anne turned, looked at her. Agonized eyes... His face desperate, savage... He walked past her...

...

Anne walked down the long corridor of the convent. Feet hurting... Underclothes soaked with perspiration... She put on her fur coat. An evening's work, done... Tired... Get outside, where there was air... She pushed the great door. The yellow light from the hall falling on faces in the darkness. Faces lined up, waiting... The smell of liquor... A crowd of soldiers pushing forward, toward her. 'Walk five miles to dance 'th 'a girl, an' then git turned out...' Voices growling... A young boy lurching, half drunk...

"Say," he said, "Lemme touch yer. Lemme hol' yer hand a minit, will yer?" Anne turned and held her hand out. Tears in the boy's eyes... He grabbed her hand and shook it. "Christ! S'the first time in two years I touched a decent woman..." Other hands held out. Gripping... Her hand hurting...

"Good night," she said. "Good night."

...

Anne jogged her horse toward the village, slowly. She had ridden out to watch A Battery shoot this morning,– out into the glory of the winter morning, the dazzle of sun on new snow... Her horse cavorting, snorting, travelling sideways... Knees close, thighs and shins holding... 'There, boy, there!' Her hand against the firm neck... 'Come on!' They'd broken to a canter,– the wind in your teeth, the gleaming snowfields rushed past... The General had been there and Captain Davis, and the Colonel, and she had stood and talked and watched the slender guns recoiling, their white puffs bursting miraculously on the hills across the valley... Why, that was why they were here,– so that those guns could,–

Children straggled along the road, carrying heavy school bags. 'Guten Morgen, Fräulein.' "Today is there no school then?" Anne asked. They began school at seven, these German children, and stayed till four... It was but nine now... "Heute the Amerikaners shoot across the schoolhouse!" The rosy faces, grinning. "Today is no school. Hoorah!" they shouted, running...

...

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Pay day. Anne had seen the soldiers lined up that afternoon as she came in from riding. A man, walking unsteadily before Anne down the street. At the canteen one of A Battery's sergeants leaned against the doorpost. "Won't you come in?" Anne asked. He flushed. 'B'lieve I'll stand here.' She heard harsh laughter from the beer saloon as she went in. A crowd was in there. No crowd in the canteen... 'Move on!' Anne heard the Sergeant outside the front door say. 'Aw Hell,' a thick voice, 'ain't I got a right to talk to tha' girl in there as much as you have,—' 'Move on!' The Sergeant's voice took on a sharpness... Anne went on pouring cocoa, talking to the three soldiers who had come in. 'All I want to know is, when are they goin' to take us home?' the soldiers asking...

She poured a mug of cocoa for the Sergeant. He must have been standing outside there for an hour... And yet, he wasn't stationed there, he had no arms on... His feet were crossed, his broad back leaned against the door jamb. Another sergeant stepped up and joined him. 'He come round twice' she heard the first one saying... The second took his place, his back against the door post. The first one walked off. 'I'll send Brown round at nine' she heard him saying...

...

"Ready to go home?" Sergeant Brown strolled in. "I'll walk over with you,— carry that box." 'Don't bother. I walk home every night,—' "Every night ain't pay night," said the Sergeant. He took her box. They stepped out into the dark street. A man lurched past them. "*Look* out there!" The man fell, and lay groaning in the gutter. "The boys is homesick," the Sergeant muttered, "and the stuff's cheap." They stopped at the Colonel's mess to get bread for Anne's breakfast. Anne tapped at the basement window as she did each night. She watched the mess cook reach for the half-loaf. He fell, suddenly, to the floor on his face. Lay there, groping, clutching at the concrete.

The Sergeant walked in, picked the loaf up, walked out. "Come on," he said. Here was her billet... Walkin' home with girls to protect 'em, then wantin' to kiss 'em... Hell... She wouldn't hold her hand out to you like that if she knowed,— 'Thank you, Sergeant. You're awfully good, all of you,' she was sayin', 'Good night.'

"Good night, Ma'am," said the Sergeant...

...

Anne opened the window of her billet, leaned out. Great, puffy clouds, chasing each other across the bright stars. From the street, the yowling of belated soldiers... A voice, raised in altercation with the guard there... One man, on guard and sober, jailing his fellows... Wishing he weren't on guard, and were drunk... Men, who stood voluntary guard outside a girl's canteen... Men, who fell forward, clutching... Men, who built Cathedrals and then fought wars and

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knocked them all down... Women,– who could neither build Cathedrals nor knock them down,– but only raise men... Men were the best,– a force in men that made them low and made them noble...

Taps, blowing somewhere far off in the valley. Like a thin echo, from the south, the same sweet music, ringing... Then, thrilling, growing, each note sad, sweet, it sounded in the town street. Trailed off, into the clear night... Silence...

...

Anne lit the candle. Money. Filthy, paper marks,– she had to count them. Brother Roberts would be round for his account tomorrow... She bent over the table. Must paste the filthy halves of the torn notes together,– pin them in wads of ten... Make out a green slip,– the green slip, with your receipts must tally with the inventory of the goods they'd sent you... Anne chewed her pencil. Now, when the inventory was in francs, and when everything had to cost either one mark or two marks, and when fifty centimes was worth three quarters of a mark... Damn... Brother Roberts was very particular about these green slips. Anne leaned back, stretching her arms up, yawning... The candle flickered...

...

Frau Schmidt wept. Her bowed head rested on the stair rail when Anne came down. Anne patted her shaking shoulder. "Was ist los?" The woman's work-red hands covered her face. Tears trickled through the fingers. 'O-o-o-oh,' she sobbed. "Tell me." Anne stood, watching some soldiers putting up a fence outside the window. Grass, showing green now...

"Mein Feldchen," sobbed the woman. "My little field! The Oberst is taking my little field for his horse pasture. From where, then, shall I my goat feed? And if she no food has, have my children no milk. That is all I have. My Mann is dead. O-o-o-oh."

"There!" Anne patted the trembling shoulder. Why had he taken this field? There were a hundred others he might have taken... Frau Schmidt so kind, so generous... Would never take pay for anything,– just soap and a few candles... She'd ask,– yet that was dangerous. This was the Colonel's job. She couldn't interfere with his job... "I'll see what I can do," she said, "I'll see..."

...

"That field?" The Colonel looked at her sharply at lunch. Now if this girl would only interfere, then you could,– "I need a paddock. The woman's planted early, Swiss grass. Do the horses good to get on green grass."

"I see," said Anne. "Yes."

...

"The Gen'ral wantscha to come to dinner wid him." The Headquarters orderly stood in the doorway of the canteen. Some girl,

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theirs, hand-shakin' wid de gen'rals... 'I can't,' the girl was sayin', 'thank him and tell him I can't...' Some kid, that'd throw down a gen'ral jest cause she wanted to stay and talk to God damn soldiers... He saluted, turned, went out. In ten minutes he came back. "De Chief of Staff, he says de Gen'ral's partic'lar 'bout wantin' ter see yer. He'll send a car at six." Say, de Gen'ral must be pretty soft on dis one... Girl, lookin' up from de stove, surprised...

"Oh," she said, "all right."

...

The aides pulled armchairs to the fire after dinner. Anne sank into one. Civilized, fine things... The General, looking at her... His keen eye,–

"You think the men are happy in your town, Miss Wentworth?" The General settled back, watching her profile. One by one the aides, the Chief of Staff, Miss Shanks drifted off to play the graphophone and dance. Good... That was what he wanted... This girl must know what the men thought... He had an idea the morale in the artillery brigade was nearing danger... The officers denied it. Officers with the heavy artillery, he knew, were drinking... Officers with the light artillery, fine fellers, but sitting, perhaps, on an unseen volcano... This girl, of course, would never suspect what he was trying to find out...

Anne sat, gazing at the red coals under the big log. So this was what he wanted... Careful... The Colonel, Davis had told her, was pulling strings at G.H.Q. to have the outfit left here... His wife a daughter of someone at G.H.Q. or something...

"I think the men want to go home," she answered.

"You think that if they were kept over here they'd,–" he paused, "feel badly?"

Anne looked at him. So he knew, did he, that the morale was rotten? One of the aides came in, asked her to dance. She rose, still looking at the General. Really trying to get at the truth, this General...

"I think they'd feel rather dangerously badly," she said...

...

"Did you succeed in getting Frau Schmidt's field back?" Davis mounted his horse next Anne, outside her billet. He glanced at the neat fence round the Colonel's paddock. Inside the fence the green, Swiss grass was sprouting.

"The horses aren't in there yet, but I believe he'll take it," said Anne. They rode down through the swamp where catkins dangled. About them the sharp, tart sweetness of the northern springtime.

"That's War," said Davis. "One set of people does a thing, and another set suffers for it." Why, tears in the girl's eyes... 'If only she hadn't been so good to me when I was sick,' she said. They rode on. The horses jogged together, after these six weeks... He watched

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her raise her face a little, sniffing the sweet smells in the hollow. Her grey eyes watching for trout that darted in the big pools... Spring...

"I expect you'll be going home soon," Anne said. The man's face clouded faintly...

"And spend our lives commuting," he said. "Sitting in offices. Riding in limousines. Getting fat, puffy. Playing golf on the same links every week-end. Being safe,–" A deer stepped into the trail, stopped, looked at them, plunged into the thicket, white flag flaunting. The horses snorted, jumping... Knees close to warm flanks, hands patting sleek, curved necks, voices, 'Whoo, boy! There boy!' They got them back, into the trail together. The girl's eyes laughed.

"It's the end of Youth, this," the man said. "When'll we ever be off in the country in the springtime again, with all the horses that we want to ride on? You know, when I first saw you," they slowed down, "you reminded me of home. After this you're going to remind me of my lost youth." The girl bending, patting her horse's sleek neck...

"Am I?" she said...

...

Again, the village. The horses walking. Soldiers stood in little groups along the sidewalks. Through open windows Anne could see that the saloons were empty. Men turned, saluted, as they rode past. A fresh snap in their salutes...

"Something's happened," Anne said. The Captain smiled. Women had strange ways of getting at things... Outside Frau Schmidt's house Anne's orderly waited, grinning.

"We're goin' home," he said. He took the bridle.

"What?" The Captain, sharply. "What's that?"

"Goin' home with the Division, Sir. The Colonel announced it at retreat this evening." The orderly watched him. The Captain, tall an' lanky, his hand on the saddle, standin', lookin' down at her... She, lookin' up at him, kinda slow like... Say, these two had been ridin' together pretty reg'lar,– perhaps,–

Anne watched the man's face. His eyes, looking absent, through her, past her... "I have a child," he said quietly, "that I have never seen. My wife writes that she's taught her to say my name."

"You'll be glad to get home." Davis's wife, the Lieutenant-Colonel had told Anne, was one of the most beautiful girls he'd ever seen... And the Lieutenant-Colonel was quite a judge of,– Davis turned, mounted his horse, turned its head to the roadway.

"Yes," he said. "Yes..."

...

The Colonel walked down the town street. Show the men he didn't care about the God damned order... Show 'em *his* back was as stiff as ever... Return salutes,– they thought you hadn't seen 'em... Soldiers! These men weren't soldiers. Only God damned civilians...

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Civilians, standing in droves outside that Y.M.C.A. shop... Girl, handing 'em cups of stuff out through the window... The place so full inside that half of 'em couldn't get in. The saloon at the corner almost empty. Hell, if they'd been soldiers, they'd be drinking liquor, not crowding that place... The Colonel turned the corner. Go see how the grass was coming in his new paddock... Horses, at least, would be turned in in good condition. Grass, coming nicely... German woman, hanging on the new fence, looking at it, holding a white goat by a long string. Goat evidently going to have a young one shortly... Woman looking at him, tears in her eyes... The Colonel wheeled and walked off. Damn these women...

"Sergeant!" The Sergeant at the picket line saluted. "You'll turn the officers' mounts in on that grass tomorrow!" He'd show that Y.M.C.A. girl... "And Sergeant," the Colonel paused. That Y. girl knew the General,– "Send the old woman over a load of hay when we go."

"Yes, Sir!" said the Sergeant...

...

'This is fer yer birthday!' Soldiers, who had once come telling her there was a horse outside, standing now, bearing a huge cake... 'If it ain't yer birthday, it oughta be...' It was the last day. Soldiers, crowding the tables, crowding the sidewalk outside... Anne travelled back and forth from the Müllers' kitchen with her pitchers. Frau Müller, weeping... Her daughter, weeping... Frau Schmidt had been weeping this morning. She had invited Anne to breakfast with her,– an Easter feast that breakfast,– and after it Anne and the German children and two soldiers had hunted for Easter eggs in Frau Schmidt's garden. 'You must not go, mein Fräulein,' the children had said, 'soon will it be spring. In spring is it so schön...' Anne made her way back, sideways, among the crowd of soldiers. Place full of smoke, and laughter...

"Yea-a-a-a-a!" A great shout went up from all the soldiers. "Hurra-a-ay!" Cheers from the sidewalk outside.

"What is it?" Anne asked.

"Time we'd be feedin' them God damned horses if they was still here!" said the soldiers.

'Over hill, over dale, as we hit the dusty trail,'

somebody started singing. Anne looked up. She had never heard these artillerymen sing.

'And the caissons go rolling along,–'

The place boomed with their voices...

'In and out, hear them shout,
Counter march and right about,
And the caissons go rolling along,–

Then it's hi! hi! hee! in the field artillery,'

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Voices on the sidewalk taking it up...

'Shout out your numbers loud and strong,
Where e'er you go, you always will know,
That the caissons are rolling along,–
(Keep 'em rolling)
And those caissons are rolling a-long!'

The song jerked to an end.

"I suppose you'll never see another horse again in all your lives," Anne said.

"You've said it!" yelled the soldiers...

...

"Say, look at that!" A new regiment marched up the town street. Anne stood in the doorway in her blue apron. Straight lines, fixed bayonets, tin hats tipped forward. Faces among them,– A hospital somewhere... Heat... The smell of ether... Paris... The Folies-Bergère, and the Casino... The streets of Bordeaux... Marines. Anne waved. An officer, coming toward her with his hand out. Middle-aged man, thickset, grey-haired, his jaw, determined. She'd seen a boy once that,– It must have been the son of this man,– Eyes, why,– "Captain Donovan!" His hand was strong now...

"You know," he said, "I've still got that 'Way of All Flesh' you sent me..."

...

"Say, these Marines sure is hard-boiled." Sergeant Brown sat down on Anne's table. Not goin' to have their girl lookin' at a bunch of bums like these uns...

"They're grand soldiers," Anne said. Nice to have them jealous... She beat time with her foot.

'If the Army and the Na-a-avy,'

the throbbing rhythm came from the saloon across the hall,

'Ever gaze on Heaven's scenes,
They will find the streets are gua-arded,
By United States Ma,–'

Bottles flew out the windows, smashing against chow wagons in the town street. Broken glass clattered on the sidewalk. Marine officers looked through Anne's door, hunting, rushed on... "Whad'd'I tell yer?" said the Sergeant, raising his eyebrow. Town'd be no place for a nice girl... 'But they're great soldiers, the Marines!' was all the girl said...

...

Pink dawn... Last things in her musette bag... Toothbrush, collar. Anne tiptoed across the hall to see the children. They sat up in their mother's great bed. Little Irma's arms clung about Anne's military collar. 'Auf Wiedersehen, Fräulein...' Frau Schmidt weeping...

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Throwing her arms round Anne's neck, kissing her on both cheeks... She wouldn't forget her? 'Ach, never, Fräulein! Never...'

A truck train. Sharp commands... Soldiers entraining... The rattling of equipment... Beyond the trucks a row of German women, weeping... Anne made her way among them toward the Y. truck. The engine of the first truck snorted. The thing lurched forward. 'Ach Johan, du gehst fort!' A wail came from a girl on the sidewalk. She held her arms up toward a soldier on the truck's end. The white cloth that covered her head fell backward, showing her face, tear-stained, swollen. 'Goo'bye, Susie!' yelled the soldier, cheerful. Rattlin' forward, at last, toward God's country... 'Good-bye Grossmutter!' The shoulder of an old woman next to Anne shook as she sobbed, waving... Beyond her, fifteen other German women, all of them crying... 'Das Himmel-Mädchen geht...' The children, crowding round Anne. She gave them cookies. Hands reaching... Round, pink faces, smiling... 'Auf Wiedersehen, Fräulein!'

"Got everything?" said the Y. man. The old Ford coughed and sputtered. "Beats everything how these German Mädchens can cry!" They jounced forward...

"Auf Wiedersehen!" Anne called...

...

Coblenz. Anne wandered, waiting. Japonica and dwarf cherries were blossoming against the ugly buildings. The air was soft, and filled with the scent of blossoms. Easy to wait, now... You used to go wild when they had kept you waiting... Three lieutenants came striding down the street toward her. 'Hello, Miss Wentworth!' Fitzpatrick, Colby, another aviator... They smiled, and there was pleasure in their handshakes: 'Say but it's good to see you!' 'Come out to dinner at the airdrome, will you?' 'Give you a fly this afternoon,' said Colby... Anne laughed.

"Sure," she said, "you bet."

...

The thing jiggled. Her skirts blew up around her. She pushed them down and held them. How it did jiggle... Then,– 'Oh...' This was like swinging used to be when you were quite young... Same weight in the pit of your stomach... She held her breath, mouth open. The bumping earth, falling away below you... Falling, falling... Wind, filling your mouth, blowing furiously against you... But you weren't moving... Moving means things that rush past... Here there was nothing... Nothing but that furious, high wind... And the old earth, a purple map below there, sinking, sinking... The Rhine, a silver ribbon... Great guns! That belt around you pulling strangely... The great wing tipping, tipping... You'd fall out. A great, swirling dip,– the earth going from one wing to the other,– God, you were upside down... Breathless... The world whirling... Down, down... Gasp... And straightening out... The earth was back now, under the wings,

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instead of down below them. A fog... Everything gone, suddenly... A cloud? Just cold, white stuff... Nothing ever what you thought it would be... Here you were, moving. Yet it was just like standing still with a wind blowing... Except for the tremendous racket of the engine... Breathless, breathless... Life,– one great gasp...

Earth, coming at you... Growing bigger, bigger... Everything swelling... Houses, and trees appearing... Houses, trees, roads, everything rushing backwards... Everything except you, flying, flying... A bump. Gosh, surely you were ruined... Another one... The thing was leaping, bounding, taxying under you, jiggling the way it did at the beginning... Like Life itself, that started and ended in discomfort... People all,– all alone when they were flying... Heavens, you'd surely bump that hangar... Stopping... Stopping...

"All right?" said Colby. Anne sat back in the observer's seat, relaxing.

"Yes, all right," she said...

...

Might as well go to Cologne. It would be part of living... Anne asked for a pass at the Y.M.C.A. Headquarters. They said she couldn't have one. Well, then, she *must* go... Find the Assistant Provost Marshal's Office... 'What kind of a man is your boss?' she asked the man sitting in the outer office. 'A great big roughneck,' said the Sergeant, 'want to see him?' 'Yes,' said Anne. Roughnecks were easy... Roughnecks always susceptible to women... In five minutes she came out. The Sergeant looked up at her. This girl know'd the God damn army...

"I got my pass," she said...

...

Cologne. British officers, scarlet tabs on collars, shining buttons, swinging canes... Stolid Tommies, moustaches, buttons... 'Where's the Museum?' Anne asked a British M.P. 'I don't know, Miss,' he answered. "I don't know either," said an American soldier from behind Anne. "But come along with me, I'm goin' to find out..."

...

Cologne Cathedral. Glad to be alone here... She'd left her soldiers. The pillars of the nave stretched, like the trees of some tall forest. Or like the arched elms of a New England town street... She sat down in one of the broad pews. Queer to have pews in a cathedral... An American general clattered up the side aisle, followed by a colonel and two young aides. A German guide went with them, pointing, talking. 'Begun in 1248, finished 1863...' The General looked at Anne. He kept on looking at her as he moved on. Anne looked up at the fine, slender arches...

"Pardon me!" The General's aide coughed at the Y. girl's shoulder. Queer job, this one... Didn't exactly like it... 'Yes?' "The General would like to know if you'd care to ride to Brussels with him in his

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car?" Anne gazed at the boy. Brussels, the forbidden,– 'Y'oughta see Brussels,' the aviators had said, 'why Paris isn't,–' Gosh, you'd like to,– Girls did ride round with generals,– Evelyn Tollet had toured the whole front with some general, as if he'd been her uncle... Still... This general might not feel like someone's uncle...

"Thank you, my pass is up tonight," she said. "I've got to go back."

...

A German street car,– something the matter with the conductor, – he wouldn't take her money. Two British officers, across the aisle there, smiling: 'I say, we don't pay the Huns, you know! We ride free!' 'Oh, thanks,' said Anne. 'I see. Can you tell me where the Roman wall is?' 'It's just out here a bit. Let's take her to it, Major.'

...

"I say, it *is* nice to see a lady, you know." The Major leaned back in his armchair at the British Officers' Club, puffing a cigarette, watching Anne pour tea. "We'll have to reform our army, Weathered, – ask them to send us ladies."

"I always thought 'twas rubbish," said the Captain. "Now I'm for it. Seeing you's convinced me." Anne laughed.

"You'd better not be too sure!"

...

"If I don't get a job today, I'm going home." Anne walked out of the Director's office. Damned if she'd hang round this town any longer... Still, she'd like to get with Geoffrey's outfit, once, before she,– A Y.M.C.A. man, buying flowers in a shop there... Hyacinths, curly crisp things of pink and white and purple... She went in. The damp, warm scent of flowers... The man had a figure one embroidered on his shoulder,– He looked up at her.

"I always take flowers back with me," he said. "They make a difference in the canteens." Girl wore her uniform well... 'Yes,' she said, 'the men don't know they're there, but they do seem to feel that something's different.' The man laughed. "Got a job?" he asked. Girl might take Seavey's place,– the right sort, this one. Seavey had been the wrong sort... 'I'd like one with your outfit,' the girl was saying... "Come back with me tonight," the man said.

"Sure," said the girl...

...

Mühlhau,– a largish town, Headquarters of the Division. The Cadillac stopped before the Hotel Goldene Lamb on the main street. Anne followed the Reverend John Gates up a creaking wooden stair. He pushed open a door into a large, low room. A small man, with overhanging moustaches, looked across a great desk. Diminutive walrus, peeking across an ice pack... Next him, at a table, sat a slim man, with a pale face. Pencils in their hands, which they bounced idly against the desk's edge... '... sister of Lieutenant Wentworth who

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fell at Cantigny,' the Reverend Gates was saying... The Little Walrus holding out a small, dry paw: 'I'll make a note of it,' he said, 'I'll,–'

"Anne! Wherever did you come from?" Evelyn Tollet bounced through the door and kissed Anne. "To work with us? Fine. Just wait till I've turned in my money," she burrowed in her pockets, threw handfuls of dirty paper marks down on the table, "and then we'll go have tea with the General."

"But your green slip?" Anne watched her, amused. 'We never use 'em up here.' Evelyn, laughing, pushing the marks to one pile... 'Oh, Mr. Smoot, I never got that sugar.' The Little Walrus, tipping his chair back, dropping the marks across his shoulder into a great box... 'I'll make a note of it. I'll,–' "Why Evelyn, you've cut your hair off!" said Anne. She touched the prickly ends under the hat brim. "I hear they've warned all short-haired ladies out of Brussels,–"

Evelyn laughed. "One of these days everyone'll cut it," she said. "Come on." Anne followed her down the dark stair. A motor-cycle and a driver stood at the curb. "I have a side-car of my own now," said Evelyn. They got in. The soldier stamped on the pedal. The thing sputtered, whirled off. "The General gave it to me."

"It's a great war," said Anne...

...

The thing swooped round a corner. A guard, presenting arms... A broad drive, winding to a great house... The General of the army's great division,– Heavens... Anne stuffed blown hair under her grey hat. A smart young captain and a lieutenant stepping out under the spacious porte cochère to meet them. 'How 'bout my winnin' that bet, Miss Tollet?' the Captain calling, 'the General's been waitin' tea for you an hour. He's fit to be tied!'

"Snooks, you great liar!" Evelyn threw her trench coat on a sofa, walked toward a large room where the General stood, his broad back to the fire. She ran toward him, both hands out, took both of his hands, laughing. "I'm not late, am I, General? No, of course not!" She patted his shoulder. "I win, Snooks! Oh, General, this is my friend Miss Wentworth..." Anne shook hands. Why, this man, more like a kind uncle than a general... Standing, beaming at all the nice young people... 'Where are the girls?' Evelyn, talking to the Lieutenant. 'Just came in. Gone up to brush their hair or something...' 'Go call 'em...'

"Oh, Emmy Ja-ane!" Snooks stood at the bottom of a massive staircase, calling. Anne watched him. Girls? A girl's slippers clattering... From somewhere up above, a silvery peal of laughter... Slippers, tripping down the stair, slender ankles, the short skirt of a Y. uniform, flaring coat, white collar,– Heavens, a mop of golden curls, an oval face, brown eyes. Eyes that caught the Captain's glance, laughed at it, tossed it... 'Not too late for tea?' That silvery voice...

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The girl caught Snooks' arm, and walked into the parlor. 'Here comes the bride' the Lieutenant beside Anne whistled...

"This is Emmy Jane, Miss Wentworth," said the General. And suddenly the room, which had been just a little stiff and military, was filled with laughter...

...

"And who is Emmy Jane?" Anne clung to the side-car as the thing swung.

"Oh, she sings to the soldiers. And that Miss Smith, who poured tea, plays the piano. They're staying there,– the General sends 'em round wherever he thinks people are in the dumps and need to laugh a little. Shall I leave you at the Y. mess?"

"Yes," said Anne, "Do."

...

NUMMER 18. Figures on a white door. Anne knocked. Footsteps scuttling inside... A blue kimono,– must have just come from America, that kimono... 'Yes?' "I'm sleeping here," said Anne. She threw her bag in. 'Oh,' said the girl. A room with slanting, gabled walls, two feather beds on each side. A girl lay on one, in uniform, her hat and shoes on, gazing at the window. She didn't turn to look at Anne when she came in. The girl in the blue kimono went back to winding her hair on curlers before a hand mirror that she'd hung above the washstand. "I believe that girl there must be sick," she whispered. "She's been lying there just like that since before I came in."

"Tired, perhaps." Anne pulled a nightgown out of her musette bag. The girl on the other bed turned her head, her eyes on the three stripes on Anne's sleeve. She'd been here... She knew...

"They're sending me home." The girl bit her lip. "I never did a thing. Men fall in love, that's all. You can't help that." The stenographer girl turned, hairbrush in air. Anne poured cold water into the white china basin. 'That happens,' she said. "I was at Battalion Headquarters," the girl's voice, dull. "Tough crowd of officers up there,– all but the Major. When I came he made 'em quit wine at their mess, stop telling dirty stories. The Doctor got sore. He,–" She laid the back of a thin hand across her eyelids. Her breath, in long jerks...

"Did what?" Better be matter of fact... Not let this girl get crying...

"Ruined my reputation. Lied about me. You see, the Major got flu,– and maybe I didn't have a rotten time at that mess while he was gone. The first evening he came back,– still feeling rotten,– he asked me to go over and play checkers with him after supper,–"

"At his billet?" Anne looked at her. She nodded. "And you went?"

"Yes. It was all perfectly harmless. The Adjutant was there. We played till ten, then I went home. The Doctor saw me. He went round saying I went to the Major's billet at night, said I,– I,– Oh, I wish I could kill the creature!"

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"Was the Major in love with you?" said Anne.

"Oh, sort of addled, the way they get, you know. But he was perfectly decent about it. He was married. I'm engaged to a man in the Second Division, and he knew that. But when I went up to the outposts, he used to come after me himself on a motor-cycle. Everyone began saying 'Ha, ha, the Doctor's right, then.' It was all harmless. Gates admits that, only he says that with all this talk about me, I can't do any good there. And now they're sending me home. Why, that Miss Tollet rode all over the front for a week with General Tucker, and nobody said anything,—"

"General Tucker wasn't in love with her," said Anne.

"Ga-a-ash!" The stenographer girl crawled down under the feather bed. So these girls hadn't been suffering at all... Just having a swell time... 'How can you help men falling in love with you?' the first one saying. 'If you're the only girl they see, they,—' 'You can't,' said the other, 'you've got to let them care for you a little,— if you didn't you'd never get anything done. God knows the Y. won't help you! But men who are a little bit in love will.' "Ga-a-ash," said the stenographer again, "Ga-a-ash!" 'And what can you do to keep the rotters from talking?' said the first one. Men'd probably never get keen enough on that plain-looking girl to talk about her... 'Make darn sure they don't have anything to talk about,' the second one, 'Make 'em come and play checkers in the kitchen of the canteen, and leave the door wide open.' The first girl sat up, began to unlace her shoes. 'But can you make a Major play checkers in the kitchen?' she said.

Anne slid under the feather bed. The fool thing falling off already, was it... "Sure, you can make 'em do anything you want to," she said...

...

Morning. The feather bed slipping off you for the fifteenth time, leaving you shivering... The stenographer girl was getting up, going to work for Mr. Gates this morning. The other girl was sleeping. Anne looked at her. She had been awake, looking at the ceiling, each time the feather bed had fallen off in the night. Miserable, that girl... The stenographer girl hung a mirror on the wall, leaned toward it, rubbed grease on her face, and covered it with powder. She touched her cheeks with rouge, her lips with red stuff, blackened her eyebrows carefully, and slowly... Stood back, contemplating, head on one side... Leaned forward, giving the red lips little pokes with slender fingers... The girl in the next bed was awake now, watching. The stenographer tiptoed toward the door, went out. The latch fell softly. The girl in the next bed laughed.

"Very little chance for her, I should say."

"None at all," Anne said...

...

Towns,— and a Y. truck speeding through them. A new feel to these towns. A neatness, a scrupulous order... The streets broomed,

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and the fences whitewashed... Behind them, pansies blooming... Blossoming fruit trees... Houses, with blue walls... Two guards, side by side, their helmets tilted, bayonets gleaming, pacing each town street. Between the towns, the new green of the meadows, shining against the old green of the spruce woods...

...

A man sat in the open window of a house in the small town of Sonnenfeld, high up on the ridge. Behind him, above his head, the forest. Up there his men were posted, guarding outposts... Could never stop feeling those men up there, pacing the green woods... Before him circled the purple, bowl-like valley, deep in its center an ancient tower, perched on a great rock. Soldiers, walking up and down the street before the window... A German girl came, pails dangling from a yoke across her shoulders. 'Hey, lemme take that fer yer!' A soldier picked up her pails. Talking, laughing, they disappeared around a corner. The Captain sighed. Ought to stop them,– orders said there should be no 'fraternizing' with the Germans... Like to have a girl to talk to himself... To walk with, in the beech woods,– A Ford truck stopped before the doorway, lurching backward, stopped suddenly against the curb. A girl laughed. The Captain colored... A girl? Here? 'I thought we'd slide right back into the valley,' she said...

...

Anne looked up. A pleasant, pink-faced man, walking toward her between rows of pansies... Blushing, holding his hand out. His eyes,– this was the kind of man you'd be all right with... 'Shake hands with Captain Sage,' the Y. man saying... "We'll be right pleased to have you here, Ma'am," said the Captain.

...

"I've a billet I've been savin'," the Captain walked beside Anne down the steep street. "I hoped a lady might come." He watched her. Mustn't let yourself feel that way about her... Soldiers saluting, solemn. If you felt anything for her, they'd see... Yet,– "Have you eat, Ma'am?" he said politely.

"No, and I'm almost starved," the girl said...

...

The mess was small. Only three lieutenants besides the Captain. Lieutenant Richardson, a tall, thin man with a shifty eye that never met Anne's. His billet was in the same house with her, he said, downstairs. Lieutenant Burt, bronzed-faced, white-haired, wiry... He'd been a sergeant in the regular army, so the Captain told her. Burt frightfully embarrassed... Lieutenant Bright, snub-nosed, eager, just from a school at Langres. 'Pleased to meet you...' They sat down. Richardson dipped into his canned peas with a teaspoon. 'Now this order 'bout not fraternizing with the Germans, Captain,' said Bright, 'Just what does that mean?' 'Talk to you about that later,' said the Captain. Silence.

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"This tastes like fresh meat." said Anne, "How extraordinary! Where did you get it?" Richardson looked at Burt. Burt smiled.

"We don't talk about that," said the Captain. Have Burt shoot another deer, if she liked fresh meat... The orderly grinned at Anne across his shoulder. Silence... 'Sir!' A sergeant stood by the Captain's shoulder. 'Message from Battalion Headquarters, Sir. The Germans has been seen leadin' hosses acrost the line.' The Captain rose: 'Burt!' Burt rose. 'Get fifteen men, Sergeant.' Burt, you'll...' The voices faded.

"Gee." Bright gobbled his rice pudding. "Say, I'd a given my eye teeth to go on that trip!"

...

Fifteen soldiers stood in the steep street with their tin hats on. Anne stood in the mess door, watching. A sergeant walked among them, handing each one a pistol. The men were tying white cotton bands about one another's sleeves with clumsy fingers. 'Jese Krise,' they muttered, 'God damn this,–' 'Hey dere! Police de talk!' The Sergeant's voice sharp. He glanced at Anne. Why'd they wanna send girls wid dis man's army? 'Ten Shun!' Lieutenant Burt stepped out of a doorway opposite, a white band on his arm, and at his hip a pistol. The Sergeant stepped toward him, saluted. 'Left face!' rang the command, 'Forward, March!' The khaki figures marched up the street, and off, toward the forest. Anne watched them disappear over the hill's brow. The street was empty.

The Captain stood in the doorway of Headquarters. Girl, in the doorway opposite... Felt her,– hardly dared look... He raised his eyes, slowly. Had been waiting all this time for her to come here... A lifetime, all leading up to this one moment... Her eyes, coming back from the disappearing column, meeting his eyes. The Captain gasped. Anne smiled at him. A nice man... Shy... Without social graces,– yet with standards... A man with gentle feelings... She stepped down into the path between the purple pansies.

"What are your men going to do? Kill a few Germans?" she asked. He didn't hear her. He stepped down into the street, turned down the road beside her. Walk, beside her... Walk beside her... Suppose she should turn off toward her billet, leave him...

"Would you wish to go and look at the hall that I've been saving for you?"

"Why thanks," the girl said...

...

The hall was spacious, pleasant. It had high windows, and a broad door facing southward. Good... With a place like this, you could do something. With just a little furniture, some curtains,– "It's splendid. I can't wait till I get started," Anne said. "I hope the Y. will send my things tomorrow."

"I want you to have everything you wish for." The Captain blushed.

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Give her his life, if she went on making him feel the way he did that minute... They stepped out into the lingering, northern twilight. Day, clinging to night... They walked, slow, along the road. On one side white fences, flower gardens, paths leading to houses. On the other side, fields sloping away... Pear trees, brides, trailing white veils along the green grass... Deep in the valley the lights of another town, an ancient, purple tower... The sound of twittering birds and playing children... "That tower?" Anne glanced at him. A magic spell about the dusk here... The man, feeling something... Something,–

"They say that Martin Luther was shut up there." He walked, silent. Lucky the girl kept talking... Something here that might have, – made you,– made you,– Steady... At the corner she'd turn off to her billet. He'd have to leave her... 'You have everything you need?' Why did they send girls like her out to a bunch of roughnecks? Like to take her into his house, protect her... Into his,– God, what were you thinking...

"Yes thanks. Good night."

...

Morning. Two soldiers helped Anne clean the hall out. 'Say, whatcha goin' ter do here?' they said. 'Canteen? See'd one once,– down near Toul...' 'There's a Y. man down to Battalion Headquarters, he don't do nothin'...'

"Just wait," said Anne, "until my things come. You'll see!"

...

Two days passed. No supplies came. Anne walked up and down to mess. The soldiers watched her. 'Gold brick,' she heard them mutter. 'That God damn Y...'

"Last time I had all the things I wanted," said Anne at mess. "And no place to put them. Now,–"

"It's always that way in the army," said the Captain...

...

Two more days. It grew unbearable... Anne walked to the orderly room. "May I telephone?"

"Sir?" The Top Sergeant's pock-marked face suffused with crimson. "Yes, Ma'am. Come in!" he shouted. Say, what the Hell d'they need ter send a girl up here fer... If a guy needed a girl, why all he hadda do wuz jes' look round him... Lots o' Fräuleins...

Anne held the field piece to her ear. 'Smoot speaking,'– like a mosquito, very distant. 'Miss who? Miss Reynolds? Miss W E N, oh, Miss Wentworth? Well, where are you, Miss Wentworth? Summerfield. I'll make a note of it. Supplies? I'll make a note of it...' Damn ... Anne slammed down the receiver. The Top Sergeant spat into a pail. 'It's a nice day,' the girl said. 'Yes, Ma'am,' said the Sergeant.

...

The fifth day. Anne sat in the garden of her billet. Sun, warming her shoulder-blades, enticing the faces of the pansies southward...

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Pear blossoms against a blue sky... Well, what did a canteen matter? She yawned. Drowsy... Didn't matter, as long as you could sit in the sun... A truck snorted, stopped. A Y. man, coming up the path,– 'Morning sister!' Supplies, at last, after you'd lost all desire to work. 'Brought you some sofa pillows and some toothpaste,' said the Y. man.

"Yes, but so far I haven't got any sofas," Anne said...

...

"Did they bring you what you wanted?" The Captain looked in. How neat and fresh she looked in that blue apron... 'Sofa cushions,' she laughed, 'toothpaste!' Wonderful to hear a woman laughing... "We'll make some benches for you." He turned and walked out. Build anything she wanted if it would make her stay here... He came back with two soldiers, carrying saws and lumber. He took his Sam Browne belt and blouse off, rolled his sleeves up. 'This way...' He sawed and fitted.

"How beautifully you do it!" Anne said. Flattery,– the way to keep men going... 'Used to teach manual training,' the Captain, blushing... Anne went out with a soldier to get a table from a German saloon.

"He used to be a carpenter, the Captain," said the soldier. Show this girl the guy wasn't no better than the rest... The Cap'n, colorin' up when she spoke to him... "I used to be a dry goods salesman myself," proudly.

"Why, then you're on a real vacation," Anne said...

...

Out of the pieces that were left, the Captain made an armchair. It should be just hers. 'I'll have it carried to your billet,' he said.

"Oh, no. I'd rather leave it here," the girl said...

...

The evening was chilly. Anne lit a fire in the German stove, left its door open. A pleasant glow touched the new benches, their gay, pink pillows. She had made shelves along the wall with nails on each to hold a row of candles. The flickering, soft light falling on sprays of pear blossom, stuck in German milk jugs... The Mail Corporal strolled in. 'A letter fer yer.' He sat down in the armchair. 'Boy, I ain't sat in a real chair for two years! A-a-ah!' The groan was pleasure... 'The Captain made it,' Anne said. 'Did he now? Say! I had a letter for him, too. From his wife.' Somebody'd oughta tell this girl the guy was married...

A soldier stopped outside, in the roadway. Old Crispie, there, a layin' in an armchair, 'th his lousy head against a soft, pink pillow... A big bench, next a fire... 'Come in,' the girl said... Say, that warmth felt good... Kind of,– kind of a,– nice place... Girl, patting the bench beside her... 'Sit down,' the girl said...

...

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The Captain walked alone along the darkening roadway. See how the Girl was... You could open a canteen, but no one in God's world could make the soldiers go in... He stopped. A broad door, open. A place filled with pleasant light... A flickering fire, on each side of it benches... Pink pillows, squashed behind husky, khaki shoulders... Men sitting on the floor, their backs against the benches... One man playing checkers with a girl in a blue apron... The Girl laughed, tossing her head back. 'You've got me!' A roar of genial laughter...

The Captain turned and walked off into darkness. The soldiers,– lucky devils,– sitting there in that warm light, playing with her... His billet empty, lonely... He scratched a match and lit a candle. The wavering light touched a letter that lay on the table. He stood, gazing at it. Milly, feeling sick, complaining... Milly... Milly... He turned and flung himself face down across the great bed...

...

Anne walked to lunch. Discouraged... If only she had cocoa... You couldn't go on forever with just pear blossoms in bowls and sofa pillows... There was the Captain, standing in the doorway, waiting. She'd hate, somehow, to disappoint the Captain... "Nothing has come yet," she said. "If I had anything to ride in, I'd go get them."

"You're in the infantry now." The Captain walked into the mess behind her. She'd be getting homesick for the artillery... She'd be going ... "I've got something you can have," he said. "Christmas presents. Battalion Headquarters sent up half a truck full." Ah, he'd made her happy... Her face, not pretty like Milly's, yet somehow a face you couldn't take your eyes away from,– till she looked at you,– "You know they gave everyone stickers to send home to their folks? Then they lost all the presents. Now they're delivering 'em wholesale. There aren't enough to go round."

"Nobody got their Christmas presents, did they?" Anne took a bite. Good chance to ring the wife in... "Too bad! My mother worked so over mine,– didn't your wife plan and plan how to get things into that small box?" Turner, the orderly, giving her a sharp look... The Captain stopping a teaspoonful of canned peas in mid-air... Richardson and Burt, looking at one another...

The Captain laid his spoon down. So she knew... Somebody had told her... She couldn't really know,– Milly so pretty, so pathetic... More than a year ago now that he had torn himself away from Milly, – Milly weeping, clinging to him, making it harder... The Girl couldn't know that Milly was going to have a child almost any day now,– nobody knew that but him... This girl wouldn't understand, – things like that... Didn't know anything but goodness, this girl... 'Some day you'll have to show me a picture of your wife,' she was saying... Picture... It wouldn't be Milly... He'd burned the old Milly in his stove last night... God! If only it had been his baby! It would be

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four months old now, if it had been his baby... This Girl, here, waiting for him to answer. He couldn't answer.

"I think I'll take some of the presents to the men up on the outposts," said Anne. "I could walk up." What in the world was the matter with the man now? Orderly, grinning...

"Good," said the Captain, "there are machine gunners up there who haven't been back for a long time. They'd like some, too." He'd walk up with her... Under the forest, with its new leaves... Out, among the high meadows, filled with flowers... And Her, beside him... She got up.

"Send the stuff down soon, will you?" she said...

...

"Why these things is common down below there," Corporal Crispie dumped a pile of Christmas boxes on the table. He leaned against the table, folding his arms, watching the girl undo them. Women's hands, deft....Nice to have 'em touch you... "Why, I wuz in the hospital next to a guy that come from Is-sur-Tille. He says there wuz ten freight cars full of these Christmas boxes on a siding down there. Boys used to get in nights an' open up ten or twelve of 'em, an' give 'em to the French girls. Swap stuff for vin rooge and,– all that." A paper fluttered to the floor. Anne stooped and picked it up. 'To my dear, dear son...' She pulled out soft, carefully knitted wristers, tied with holly.

"Did they?" she said...

...

The Captain sat in Company Headquarters, looking over a bunch of service records. Between each service record, he looked out the open window to the street. Pretty soon She'd come, and he'd step out and join Her... Records,– Callahan, Private First Class. Court-Martial, for contracting venereal disease through neglect. Wounded Cantigny. D.S.C. for bravery at Soissons. The street, full of sun... Why didn't the Girl come? Tired of this damn military business... Cleary, Private First Class. 'Not at this Base Hospital, forwarded.' When you didn't know what to do in the army you could always forward... Not that way in civilian life... In business you'd have to make up your own mind... No more wasting time, and wasting money... Any business would fail run like the army... No more passing the buck when you got home. Girl ought to be here any minute... Private Cleary, wounded in the Argonne,– must have been without his pay six months now... Escaped from a Base Hospital at Bordeaux,– so they'd returned his record... Where was Cleary,– Ah, there was the Girl now,– carrying a heavy bundle. He'd take it from her... Walk beside her. The Captain jumped up.

"I'll come with you," he said.

"Oh, no. Please don't! The soldiers will enjoy it much more, you know, if,– if there's no officer. I'll find my way all right." He

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watched her walk off up the white road. Slim, grey figure... Gait like a young boy... Didn't want him... Going alone up through the fields of flowers... He walked back, slowly, to his littered table, picked up the narrow, oblong wad of papers. Private Cleary, must have been without his pay for six months... Damn Private Cleary...

...

Anne walked on. The road led through the tall dark of the spruce woods, the chill of winter still lingering in the black shade. What was the matter with the Captain? Something,– Every time she spoke to him, she hurt him... An old woman drove a cow along the roadway. 'Guten Tag, Fräulein!'

Anne slowed her pace to walk beside the woman. The woman looked up. Kind, blue eyes... Did Sonnenfeld please the Fräulein? The Fräulein found it hübsch? That was good. This cow? Ah, her she was bringing to her grandchild in the next town. "Meine Tochter," the old woman shook her head, "my daughter has in childbed died. I have fetched the cow to give milk to the baby. The cow cannot go fast,– go you gladly ahead, Fräulein." She waved her arm. "Do not wait. I am old. I go slowly. But you are young. All Americans are young..." Anne drew a long breath. The upland meadows here were filled with flowers...

"Guten Abend," she said as she walked on...

...

"Halt!" a doughboy laughed, pointing his bayonet. Six soldiers sat in the sun outside a small hut, their tin hats tipped forward. Beyond the crossroads stood a great sign. 'AMERICAN BRIDGEHEAD BOUNDARY,' said the black words, 'PASSAGE BEYOND THIS POINT IS FORBIDDEN EXCEPT BY PROPER AUTHORITY. ACHTUNG! DER AMERIKANISCHE BRUCKENKOPF...'

"Say, hello!" said the soldiers. "Set down, wontcher?" Anne sat among them, while they munched their chocolate. 'Boy, that tastes good!' 'Say, boy, git yer gun ready, here comes a Heinie!' The old woman with the cow came, slowly, up the white road.

"Your pass," said the soldier in the roadway, "Papiere, Ausweiss!" The woman fumbled in the thick folds of her skirt. At last her stiff old hand held out a paper. "Nicks goot," said the soldier, "Zurück! Back!" The Corporal strolled from the hut, looked at the paper. 'But the child of my daughter,' the woman was saying, 'without milk can she not,–'

"Nicks goot!" said the Corporal. He jerked his thumb across his shoulder. The old woman tugged at the cow's rope. She turned, and the heavy boots plodded slowly back along the roadway... "These folks gets passes from a mayor up yonder," the Corporal sat down next Anne, "and that lets 'em in all right. Then to get back, they gotta have 'em stamped at Division Headquarters. They ain't keen on walkin' thirty miles to get the thing stamped. This old dame, she

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come down yesterday. We told her she couldn't go back without she went down to Mülhau. Thick, these Heinies."

"But they'll do what you tell 'em," said another. "A God damned Frawg would a argued half an hour."

"Boy," said a third, "Say, wouldn't it be great if they'd let us fight back through France?"

"Oh, but the French," said Anne, "just think, they lost a million killed, three million wounded! More people taken prisoner alone than all our killed and wounded put together."

"Yeah! So did the Heinies," said the Corporal...

...

Anne walked back along the white road. Those machine gunners had been glad to see her... Something animal in men, that wanted,– And something higher than that, that kept them from grabbing what they,– Here was the old woman with the cow, plodding along, her head bent. Anne put her hand down on the broad shoulder. The woman shook her head. Tears in the kind eyes... 'Ich weiss,' Anne saying, 'Ich weiss.'

...

It was like going through a door out of the spruce woods. Below, the valley, curving like a green bowl. Sun on the vivid grass... White fruit trees, blooming... The Captain, walking up the road toward her...

"You got there all right?" The man looked at her. Thank God, she was back safe,– those toughs,– She was smiling... She'd had a fine time,– such nice boys... Walking beside Her... Walking beside Her ... A white tree, by the roadside, covered with blossoms... And under it a white goat, cropping the green grass... 'Your stuff came,' he said. Stuff didn't matter... It was She who mattered...

"Ah!" said Anne, "Fine!"

...

"We're going to Berlin, Sir!" Lieutenant Bright's eyes sparkled at the mess door. "We're to be ready to leave in half an hour, I've,–" The Captain whirled. The two walked off together. 'Sergeant!' he called...

"Hey, buddy! There's a war on," yelled a soldier...

...

Anne ate, alone.

"They say Pershing has come up," said the orderly. Nice to have the Girl alone, so's you could talk... "An' Foch. I guess they're goin' to march around a bit, an' scare the Heinies. Say, there ain't no hurry. Ain't nothin' ever starts when they say it's goin' ter in this man's army." The Girl, rushing off, down the street, still chewing... 'I guess I better pack my trunk,' the Girl said...

...

A sergeant came down the road, carrying in his hand a bunch of trench knives. He stopped to show them to Anne. Graceful, pointed

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daggers, with iron knuckles... "We do like this, see?" The Sergeant took a knife in his fist and lunged toward her. "An' then we do like this." He jabbed the pointed thing down. 'Ach! dass ist schrecklich!' A German woman, wailing, in a doorway.

"I see," Anne said...

"Fräulein!" The German woman beckoned to Anne, weeping. "Ach, Gott! Geht's wieder los? Will they really once more fight?" Tears, dripping to her broad breast...

"Ich weiss nicht!" [1] Anne said...

...

A little girl ran along beside a soldier in the roadway, looking up at him, head on one side. 'Gehst du auch fort?' [2] she was asking in a high voice. The soldier laughed down at her. 'Wir gehen nach Berlin,' [3] he told her, cheerful...

...

Anne put a clean collar, a comb, her toothbrush in her musette bag. How long would it take to walk to Berlin? She threw things in her trunk. Where would that go to? A knock. 'Telephone for you in the orderly room, Ma'am...'

"Oh, all right," Anne said...

...

'Miss Wentworth?' Very faint she heard the Reverend Gates' voice. Sending a what? A truck? Damn, she wanted to walk... Oh, not a truck? A dancing what? A Unit, what was that? Eight girls? A band? 'You'll have a dance. They're on their way up.' 'But,' said Anne,– The line was cut off.

...

A dance tonight of all nights... Anne tacked up curtains. The Captain had been awfully decent about it... They'd march up and stack arms at the outpost, he said, and then come back and dance, if She wanted them to... Opening crackers. Making lemonade. Moving tables... 'Why, what a long way off you do live!' An elderly, grey-haired woman coming up the path toward the doorway. 'Is this Miss Wentworth? This is the Dancing Unit.'

...

Band, booming.

'Good-bye Ma! Good-bye Pa!
Good-bye mule with the old hee haw!'

Eight Y.M.C.A. girls, in neat uniforms, wandering about the canteen...

'I may not know what the war's about,
But you bet by Gosh I'll soon find out,–'

Soldiers outside the windows, looking in, their tin hats tilted. Nothin, in Army Reg'lations ter make a guy dance... Anne unpacked cups in

[1] 'I do not know.' [2] 'Goest thou also away?' [3] 'We're going to Berlin.'

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the kitchen. What was the matter with them? The Mail Corporal came in, held out a letter to her. From Rosalind,– she stuffed it in her pocket.

"Why won't the boys dance, Crispie?" He shoved his tin hat back. Married man, him,– not afraid of women...

"Ain't uster seein' girls," he said. "Kinda scared, like."

"You dance with me, just once," she said, "and start them going." They danced, alone. Soldiers, silent, outside the windows gazing from under tin hats. Crispie's cheek beside Anne's growing red and redder ... He puffed and snorted. 'You tell 'em, Crispie,' someone yelled outside the window. Crispie bolted out the open doorway...

"Come, we'll play a nice game," said the leader of the Dancing Unit. She set chairs in a circle. 'Sometimes if you can get 'em to play kids' games,–' she murmured to Anne. 'So they often act like this?' 'Oh, often when they haven't had girls,–' "Here, now I'll blindfold you," she tied a scarf around a man's eyes, whirled him around... 'All married men change places!' bellowed the blindfolded soldier. The soldiers sat there. 'Everyone that wants to go home!' Not a soul moving... 'Everyone that wants to go to Berlin!' There was a scramble...

...

Again the music boomed forth.

'When I dream about the moonlight on the Wabash,
Then I long for my Indiana home...'

The men retired to the benches. Might be out fightin' in a coupla hours... Crawlin' through the God damn bushes, listenin' to bullets whistle... Crispie, dancin' with a strange girl... Tryin' to show what a fine guy he wuz...

Anne stood before a tall man that they called Pete. Bravest man in the outfit, everyone said... "Come, dance with me," she said. His hand jerked to his tin hat, then fell down, awkward. "Sir?" He flushed. "I cain't dainee..." Christ, why hadn't he runned when she come next him... If she'd knowed what he dreamed last night,– 'Come on, try!' Standin' before him, holdin' up her elbow... 'These girls will think we're stupid up here.' All around, the God damn soldiers, watchin'... Your God damn arm a shakin'...

Anne took his hand. Three stripes on that sleeve, four on the one behind her,– two years, three wounds,– queer how that big arm trembled as it touched her... They danced off. 'You've been wounded three times?' He stepped on her toes, stopped, panting, trembling, beads of perspiration on his forehead...

"Yes Ma'am," he gasped...

...

The Captain stood in the open doorway. The Girl, dancing,– so she danced, did she? Where he was raised, they thought it wicked to dance,– one with drinking, smoking... Well, some folks thought it all right,– Wished she wouldn't dance with Peterson, though... Peter-

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son a fighter, a hard drinker, a bad man with women,– Sober tonight, though... Good Heavens, a grey-haired woman charging at him, holding her hand out. 'We're having such a pleasant party, Captain. You dance?'

"N-n-no, Ma'am," said the Captain...

...

Thank God, it was over... Anne walked toward her billet through the scented moonlight. Those girls had seen at last that it was useless ... The soldiers would not dance. So they had fed them. You could always feed them...

...

Anne leaned on the sill, looked out the window. The pear tree in the yard stood eerie, bridal, in the vague, white moonlight. On the soft breeze, its petals fluttered downward. Two guards walked, slow, along the white road, tall shadows... Bayonets, slanting upward, flashing the moonlight... By the gate a tall figure stopped, looking upward. 'Miss Wentworth?' It was the Captain,– they were starting... War ... Her bag was ready... 'Yes?' 'I've had a message from Headquarters,' he was saying. 'We're not going.' He turned, and strode off...

Anne lit a candle. The wavering, yellow light shut out the moonlight. So little things always shut out the big things... She opened Rosalind's letter. 'This is to tell you something terrible,' that round, pretty writing. Anne let the letter drop to her knee. War... The worst things It did to you, It did through letters... Josiah,– or her mother,– God... You must go on... She raised the paper. 'Joan was drowned off the transport as it lay at anchor in Brest Harbor. They don't know if she jumped, or if she fell. She was to sail next day...' Anne's hand dropped. She turned her head, stared at the open window. White tree, against the blue night... Petals that fluttered down, and wizzled up and vanished... Women's bodies, that,– The sentries' voices... Two shadows, walking slowly... Moonlight, flashing from their bayonets... O, War... War...

...

The dawn was cool and damp... And Joan was dead... Anne stood at her window, looking at the white mist that filled the valley. Joan had been dead two weeks... Or more than that... The white mist swirled below her. It covered the fields, the town. Up from the sea of mist, a grey-black spool rose,– the ancient tower of the horsethief... A trumpet sounded. From the old tower's top a flag poked up, and hung, a twisted rag, there... Then billowed out, into the rising sun, red, blue, white, gleaming... The mist swirling, rising... Only the flag there in a white, shining ocean... What did it stand for, that flag? What did people die for? Anne sniffed the fog. Alive, thank God... And young ... Yet not so young, now... Never be really young again,– Too many nights without sleep...

...

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The soldiers came into the canteen, and sat down. They pushed their caps back, stretching out their feet. Kinder good when you was hot from drill, to have a cool, nice place to come and set in... A girl to talk to... Girl talked just as easy as if you'd been to home,– 'z if you wuz still the same kinder boy you wuz when you left home... She didn't know nothin', this girl...

"What have you been doing today?" Anne handed lemonade,– A new face in the line today... A big man... Green eyes, that could be evil, or that could be merry...

"Been out teachin' the lewies to drill," the man said. The others laughed. "Say, how much are them cakes?" He looked toward the pile of small oiled-paper packages.

"One mark," said Anne. "Want some?"

"Say, Cleary, you just got back from the horsepital, you'd oughta have cash..." The others, watching the big man...

"Cash? Boy, d'you suppose they pay you in them horsepitals?" Cleary laughed. "Gawd, no! 'Your service record's lost,' they tell you. My service record ain't showed up since I got knocked acrost that ditch back in the Argone. All the money I had in six months I got sellin' buttons and watches and stuff I took off the Fritzies,–"

"Have a roll of cakes free!" said Anne.

"No Ma'am." He slammed a mark down. "Cleaned up on a crap game down to Mühlhau. Say, buddy," Cleary walked toward the armchair. "That there girl in the Y.M.C.A. down to Mühlhau, *she* must be makin' money. Sells these same cakes for two marks. This Y. ain't tryin' to make nothin' outa the God damned soldiers! Oh, no!"

"What did you say?" Anne came round the table, sat down. Better get this thing straight... This new man's spirit, filling the whole place...

"I said, Ma'am, that the Y. girl down to Mühlhau, she charges two marks for them same cakes." His green eyes narrow...

"Look." Anne drew a green piece of paper from her pocket, unfolded it. "This is the invoice," she pointed. "They bill all this stuff to us in francs, see? Cakes of chocolate, packages of crackers, fifty centimes apiece. We sell in German money. Fifty centimes is about one mark fifty. How many fifty pfennig pieces have you seen? None. There aren't any. We have to sell everything for either one mark or for two marks. I make on the chocolate and lose on the crackers. Miss Hobhouse sells her crackers for two marks, and her chocolate for one mark. She loses less, because there isn't so much chocolate. If I'd sold you chocolate, you'd have said I was,–"

"Say, if you sold me chocolate," the man's eyes twinkling, "I'd say you was the only Y. girl in the A.E.F. had any,–"

"Come down here after chow," said Anne, "I'm putting it out then."

...

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"This new man?" Anne asked the Captain at lunch.

"Cleary? Oh, he's the brightest man we've got. Ought to be a non-com,–" He waited till the orderly went to the kitchen. "I keep him where he is because he can make the men laugh." So, the girl had seen the man's charm... Damn Private Cleary...

...

The line stretched from the canteen door along the roadway. At its head stood Cleary. He grinned at Anne. 'When do we eat?' he shouted. She pushed out the first cake of chocolate, took his two marks. 'That there Miss Hobhouse,' Cleary said, 'grabs your money before she gives you your stuff. Now, a reg'lar barmaid,–'

"Come round behind here," said Anne,– taking a long chance this,– "and show me how to be a regular barmaid, will you?" She watched the man. Would he turn the laugh against her? He could. He was hesitating, looking slowly, with his green eyes... Then he raised one long leg, threw it across the table, and stood next Anne, grinning. 'Hey, dere, Buddy!' he slapped the table. 'Snap out of it! Two marks for this here chocolate!'

"You tell 'em, Cleary!" yelled the soldiers...

...

"Look!" A soldier sitting in the armchair pointed at the wall, trembling, moving his finger back and forth as though he followed something. Anne watched him. It was the oldish one, who always walked stooped forward. "Look at that," he was gasping, "Look at that..."

"He's got 'em again," said Cleary, standing next Anne. 'Got what?' "Got snakes." Cleary's long leg went up, over the counter. He laid his hand down on the shoulder of the oldish soldier. The man trembled, glaze-eyed. 'Come on, Buddy!' He walked him to the door, patting his back... 'That's all right...' They went out...

"Trouble with him is," Cleary came back, sat down on the table. "He's aged. He's had it tough, too. There's on'y twenty of us guys that started with the comp'ny left now, and all the rest of us has been back,– horsepitals, delousing plants, or schools or prison,– but that guy, he's seen the whole damn show through and never got scratched. No wonder he took to liquor! That gives him these attacks, like,–"

"But he's much older than the rest of you," said Anne.

"Yeah," said Cleary, "He's old. Thirty when the war broke out. Thirty-two now. Old men like him can't stand it. Orficers can be that old, but not the soldiers. It breaks 'em up. Say, that old bird can hike to Berlin yet, though, if he lays off liquor."

"I suppose he can," said Anne. Still, thirty... Awfully old, that...

...

The bugle blew 'Assembly.' The soldiers piled out, marched off to play ball. The canteen was suddenly deserted, silent... Outside, the shining afternoon of summer... Anne dusted the tables, setting them

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to rights... Old magazines, with tattered covers... Greasy books... Tracts on the evils of venereal disease in gay, checked covers, left there by a doctor to be 'put out'... Ink bottles, bad-pointed pens, bits of sleazy stationery with a Red Triangle on it... The scrawled beginnings of letters: 'Kind Friend.' Anne picked up, dusted. Nice, to have a moment's peace, not have to talk to anyone, not smile... Footsteps at the door. The Captain walked in, sat down in the armchair, hands out along the broad arms, chin resting on his chest. He did not speak.

"I thought you'd gone to play ball..." Anne made neat piles of all the magazines, burying the gay, checked covers underneath them.

"Bright went," he said. He sat there, staring at the floor, his fingers drumming. If he could talk to her... If he could tell her all about this ... If she'd sit on the chair's arm, look down at him the way Milly,– God... Milly...

"You've seen a newspaper? They haven't signed the Treaty?" she asked. Something the matter with him... One used to feel like that in France... Cafard...

"No." God, if she only wouldn't be so polite... So distant...

Anne picked up her things, walked out into the street. Better just let him sit there, quiet. Nothing to do for men if they could not talk... She'd go write a letter... Answer Jerry Suydam's last one,– tell him for the fourteenth time she wasn't going to marry... Why should Jerry think that out of all the world, she'd pick out him to marry? 'Blümchen, Fräulein!' Children held up bunches of buttercups and pansies, wilted by hot fists. The Fräulein loved flowers,– but today she was not listening... They skipped beside her. Anne strolled toward her billet. Man, sitting with bowed head, alone... She stopped, looked at the skipping children, held her hands out.

"Danke schön! Come! We will back to the canteen go, lemonade and cookies have. And you shall show the flowers to the Herr Hauptmann." They took her hands and skipped beside her to the canteen..

...

The Captain raised his head. Her voice... So, she was coming back, then,– God... But her voice was talking German... And suddenly, the place was filled with children. A little girl, with yellow braids of hair, crawling up in his lap, and showing him a wilted bunch of pansies. And the Girl, smiling at him.

"We're going to have a cookie party," Anne said...

...

The Captain sent ten men to help Anne 'borrow' a piano. Tully, the Bugler, was a great pianist, Cleary had told her. And music kept morale up... Cleary walked beside her toward the schoolhouse. 'The Schoolmaster, he don't never use his old piano...' The Schoolmaster was venerable, white-haired... "Aber mein Sohn spielt," he protested,

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"my Son,– he is musician. His heart will break when he home comes!"

"Suppose we leave it," Anne said.

"Aw, say! Best way to get things off these Heinies is just to take 'em. All together, boys! Easy!" Cleary, directing. The Schoolmaster watched his piano bump the door jamb. He shook his grey head. A lifetime of savings, and now,– 'We will it to you return,' the Amerikanisches Fräulein, saying...

...

A brilliant morning. Anne, opening the house door, sniffed its sweetness. Hawthorne blossoming in the hedge across the road now,– 'Miss Wentworth!' Richardson, the tall Lieutenant with the shifty eye, stood in the garden. 'Will you do me a favor?' he was asking...

"If I can."

"I have some letters, written in French, and I can't read them." He drew a package out of his blouse. They sat down on a sunny bench against the house wall. Anne drew a letter from a slimsy envelope,– a squirly, scrawling hand, the ink bright green. "'My little friend,'" Anne read aloud, "'Here are three weeks since I have received thy sweet letter, and yet I do not hear a word from thee. I demand of thee again, dear friend, what should I do? As I have written thee already three times, we cannot longer keep it from my mother...'" Anne looked up. Didn't like this... Richardson's shifty eye glimmering at her. His mouth,– open. He was listening, intent. Had the girl,– Had he? Anne's eye skipped down the page. Did not want to get mixed up in this... 'My child,' she saw. 'Our child...' 'The accouchement....' 'Where shall I go? When wilt thou come?' the letter pleaded. The man next Anne waited. In the garden pansies, their backs toward them, in discreet rows...

"Yes?" said the man, "Go on."

"'The little dog you left with me is good. He talks to me of thee, and I to him. He grows big, eats much nourishment. If thou couldst send, perhaps, a little money...'" The thing was over. Anne sat, looking off across the fields. Golden dandelions, flaunting their brilliance in the green grass... The girl who'd written this was desperate... Desperate... "You don't talk French?" Anne asked.

"No, Ma'am."

"And she cannot speak English?"

"No, Ma'am. There are two more here,–" Anne stood up. Better not get mixed up in this mess...

"You'll have to get someone else to read them to you," she said...

...

A low whistle, driving away the tenuous sleep of dawn. Anne tossed. Four o'clock... She'd asked the guard to wake her. Greyness... Cold water, splashing in a bowl, against your face, making you gasp. Gooseflesh along your arms. A life of comfort when this should be over...

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Never march out again with soldiers in the morning... God... Grow old, and stupid... There would be comfort dragging on to old age... She clattered downstairs, ran up the street to breakfast, blood rushing. Warmth, glowing all over... Young still... Crazy, for just a little while more... Thank God...

Soldiers, with rifles, lined up in the steep street. Above the houses, tree-tops. Above the tops of trees a golden light. Feet, shuffling, stamping, to keep the chill out. Voices... A sharp command. They turned, faced up the road. 'Forward, March!' The sound of tramping feet. Anne walked beside the Captain and the Sergeant. Their feet swung, long and free, toward the forest.

The Captain turned, and shouted. The Sergeants shouted. They turned across a field. The Girl, beside him... Green field, full of flowers, full of sunlight... Dewdrops, that glistened... Ahead, the long wood road that led through the beech woods... All day she'd be there beside him... Be there beside him...

...

"I want to shoot," Anne said. The Captain looked down at her. Queer ambition for a woman... Bad enough to have made her walk here,– six miles... Milly wouldn't have walked six miles,– couldn't... But this girl...

"Come on, I'll get you a gun," Lieutenant Bright said. She lay on one of the slanting piles of earth out in the big field. "Here, hold it this way. Now pull!" "Ouch!" It banged her shoulder. Lieutenant Bright moved on. A little flag waved out toward the wood's edge. 'You missed,' Cleary, grinning at her on the next mound...

"You ain't got your sling right!" The Top Sergeant bent over, yanking the strap about her shoulder. God damn girl wuz a sport, he'd tell the whole world...

"But the Lieutenant," said Anne,–

"Aw, you don't want to listen to what them fellers say,– they don't know nothin! Now try. There, you hit it!" The Girl, laughing...

"Did I really?" she said...

...

Afternoon. Tramping feet, tired this time. Mottled light, slanting ... Anne walked behind the column. Six miles to go... Feet, stumbling against roots... Muttered curses... The Captain walked beside her, silent. He knew, now... Didn't care that Milly,– Didn't care about anything, if only he could walk beside,–

'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag, and,–'

A tenor voice that echoed. Cleary, challenging the others,–

'Smile, smile, smile!'

Forty voices, ringing...

'While you've a lucifer to light your fag,'

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he tossed it to them...

'Smile, boys, that's the style.'

The pace quickened:

'What's the use of worrying?'

one's feet went easier...

'It never was worth while, So
Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag,
And smile, smile, smile!'

The forest rang...

...

Anne looked up. Why, here they were in the field of flowers above the town roofs...

'Oh, it's not the pack that you carry on your back,
Nor the Springfield on your shoulder...'

So soon... Feet swinging, swinging... Hadn't seemed six miles...

'Nor the five-inch crust of khaki-colored dust,
That makes you feel your limbs are growing older...'

Feet would swing on like this forever, behind a man like Cleary.

'And it's not the hike on the hard turnpike
That wipes away your smile,
Nor the socks of sister's
That raise the bloomin' blisters,
It's the last, long mile!'

The Captain shouted a command. They marched on, silent. Scuff, scuff... Boots, dusty... Feet, heavy... The Corporal of the Guard, coming from the Orderly Room, saluting before Anne. 'The Gen'ral's having a party. His automobile will be here for you at six.'

"Oh, dear!" said Anne...

...

The Division Chaplain danced better than the Colonels. A dapper young man... 'You have religious services in your town, don't you?' 'Why,' said Anne, 'No.' Waltz, lilting:

'When you dream about the moonlight on the Wabash...'

He'd come up, he said... 'Oh, no, don't bother! Fighting troops never seem to think about religion,– it's in the Air Service where they can't have religion, that they want it.' Yes, he'd come... Anne closed her eyes. The man did waltz well...

"Snooks, could you send me home?" Anne's feet ached. Colonels, on top of twelve miles,– 'Sure,' said Snooks, 'I'll take you.' The Cadillac purred forward. In the great, glassed-in thing Anne sat, with Snooks beside her. Tired,– why had she promised to go on that fool trip on the Rhine tomorrow? The brakes screamed as the car stopped. They both lurched forward. Two soldiers standing in the bright glare

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of the headlights, helmets tilted, rifles held before them. "Halt!" they bellowed.

"Christ!" said Snooks. "We must be on the wrong road!" He opened the door a crack and peeked out. 'Who goes there?' a stern voice... "A friend." Snooks' voice, nervous.

"Dismount, friend, and advance to be recognized!" Anne watched Snooks step forward, gingerly,– jump when they yelled: 'Halt!' 'Don't make no difference who you are,' the voice, commanding. 'Git back in there and turn round. And make it snappy!' The soldier fingered at the trigger of his rifle. General's aide, off with some woman wuz he... Snooks climbed back in. His knees shook.

"When I see those old doughboys fingerin' their triggers like that, I get nervous," he said. "Only last week they killed one of their own outfit for walking by 'em." The great car backed and filled. Anne looked back. Two doughboys standing, immovable, like statues, in the darkness...

...

Machine gun truck, jolting, springless... Jiggles that ran up your spine, hitting you somewhere underneath the skull. Stopping at other towns, picking up Y. girls. Awful towns... The other Y. girls thought *your* town was awful...

A great, white boat moored to a pier in Coblenz. On its deck, Evelyn Tollet, guarding two barrels full of doughnuts. This party was for Evelyn's four-stripers,– Anne had come because these two-year soldiers must have been Geoffrey's... 'But they're letting a lot of the Rainbow Division get on,' Evelyn worried, 'my men *hate* them. Always get into fights,–'

"Friends, they were our comrades in arms, we must remember,–" a Y. man, puffing... The four-stripe soldiers shoved past him, slid down the gangway. Hell, they weren't a goin' on no trip with all these God damn,– They disappeared among the crowds on the dock. 'They'll go A.W.O.L.,' said Evelyn, 'the Colonel will kill me,– What'll I do?'

"Get somebody to start the boat up," Anne said...

...

Dance music on the top deck. Men who grabbed you, whirled you ... Hills, tearing past, round and round with castles on them. Jazz... Dizziness... Talk about Cantigny. Talk about the Argonne... Talk about Saint-Mihiel... Jazz... Dizziness... The Lorelei Rock, whirling past the steamer. Ich weiss nicht was zoll es bedeuten... Blue hills, whirling against the skyline. Hot uniforms... Sweaty soldiers... You were here so Germany'd sign a treaty... Make the world safe... That was worth while. This was the way you made them sign a treaty... 'Smile a While...' Waltz... More seasick than the others... You danced to make the Germans sign a treaty. 'Good Mo-o-orning, Mr. Zip, Zip, Zip...' Jazz all the way to Bonn... Boat slowing. Band stop-

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ping. Thank God. Along the shore a sunny esplanade with Britishers walking on it. Officers, swinging canes, brass buttons gleaming. Tommies, with moustaches, standing, looking. 'Oh, you bloody Tommies!' the remaining four-stripers, yelling... 'Who won the wa-ar?' 'Say, that's the way to get them fellers started,' said a soldier to Anne. 'Oh, you bloody,–' They crowded the boat's rail. 'Friends!' said the Y.M.C.A. man, 'friends, these men were our comrades,–'

"Listen!" Evelyn Tollet waved at the American Marine Lieutenant on the boat's bridge. "Start this boat up and get away from here," she said. "We don't want to start a war with England." The boat backed. On the quai the British officers swung their canes. They never looked up...

...

Blind man's buff. Three-legged races, round the deck house. Tied to a soldier, who almost yanked your leg off... Galloping round, colliding with two others... Picking yourself up. Aching... Making the world safe...

...

Machine gun truck. Seat, jiggling, springless. Your spine one long pain. Flying past on each side, the serene fields. Home, at last...

"You're tired." The Captain helped her out. Why, the Girl's hand was trembling... Thank God, she'd come back,– day had been Hell without her... 'Turner, get Miss Wentworth some supper! Make some fresh tea!' Anne sank down on the sofa that he pulled out. Snooks here? Heavens... Just dashed up to inspect the outposts for the General... Now wouldn't she come with them? The Captain looking at her. 'You eat,' he said, 'and then perhaps the woods'll make you feel good.' Such a kind man... He'd missed her...

"Yes," she said, "I'll come."

...

She put her face back, sniffing the cool spice of the forest. The Captain strode ahead, determined, silent. He'd show this young pup... Behind, Snooks panted. Hell, but these woods were dark... How did the man know which path,– "Halt! Who goes there?" Snooks jumped. Christ, why did they need to bellow? 'Commanding Officer.' They stopped. Silence. In a tree overhead a squirrel scuttled. "Advance, Commanding Officer, and be recognized!" That was Cleary. Anne could see him, now, stern in his tin hat. You forgot that these men were doing a job here,– "Halt!" The Captain stopped again. Cleary presenting arms... 'All right,' called the Captain. Snooks, asking Cleary silly questions. Cleary, snapping back answers, his face wooden. He saluted as Snooks walked on. Didn't see Anne,– yes, suddenly a twinkle. He winked one eye. What the Hell d'they wanna walk the Girl up here this time o' night fer?

A fire, flickering flames lighting men's faces under helmets... Touching spruce boughs above them... A half a mile of woods. another senti-

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nel, another fire... Snooks, stumbling over roots now. "Let's go back," he said to Anne, "You must be tired."

The Captain whirled on his heel. Like to show this damn pup,– Coming up here to see the Girl... He looked down at her, gently. "Are you tired?"

"No," said Anne, "Let's go the whole six." The Captain strode on through the darkness. His Girl... His Girl...

...

Anne walked toward the orderly room. She'd telephone down and see if she could get the film of Mary Pickford that Snooks had told her they had. Headquarters, blue painted parlor of a German house. Corporal, sitting at the Captain's table. 'Telephone? Sure.' She took the field piece.

"Say!" A guard strode in, breathing hard. "She's fainted!" he said, "Say, I never done nothin', only,–" He stood, looking at Anne. The Corporal pushed him aside, and strode across the entry.

"Who's fainted?" Anne asked the guard.

"This here German Fräulein that's in the jug there. I – I didn't do nothin'. She just,–" The man flushed. Anne jiggled the bell, looked through the open window. One of the things that one pretended not to know of... Like that house with the Red Cross across the way there ... 'Say, Miss Wentworth, perhaps you kin do something with her.' The Corporal spoke from the doorway. She laid down the telephone, followed him. The guard-room,– soldiers sitting, wearing tin hats,– into a small room beyond. Room empty, its floor swept clean. Just one chair. Sound of a woman, crying... On the floor, behind the door, a German girl lay on a folded blanket. Crying, gasping, sobbing, hands opening and shutting, chin turning from side to side, the thick knot of her hair bumping against the board floor...

"Was ist los?" Anne knelt and laid her hand on the girl's shoulder. The girl drew a long, trembling breath, then sobbed helplessly, her head turning, turning. "What's she here for?" Anne looked up at the Corporal, towering above them. Behind him another soldier, cutting the light off. Mustn't let them see that you were angry...

"Fraternizing," he said.

"But I've seen plenty of soldiers going with Germans,–" Anne held her lip in her teeth. Keep calm...

"Sure. But now and then one of 'em gets pinched. The Captain, he saw a couple out spazierin' last night,–"

"Say, the Lieutenant's comin'!" Another soldier stepped in. Three bulky soldiers, filling the small room... 'Reckon you'd better go back to the telephone,' the Corporal, nervous... Back to the telephone. The telephone... Oh, yes, that box there. Girl, lying on the floor... Left all alone with those men... If this treaty would only make the world safe... Keep the world safe from Armies of Occupation... Lieutenant Richardson looked in the door, turned, went in the guard-room.

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"Shut that door!" he shouted...

...

None of her business... Anne walked down the street. Things in the army you had to shut your eyes to... Girl, on the floor, alone... With Richardson... Richardson, who,– Wonder what had become of that poor French girl? Men... You had to let them run their own wars...

...

Supper. The Captain watched Anne. The Girl not eating... She wasn't happy tonight... By God, he'd make her happy! He'd make this town a decent place for Her to stay in! The Corporal of the Guard strode in. Crispie, dressed in a great pistol... 'The key, Sir!' The Captain took it, put it in his pocket, saluted. What did the fool have to bring it while the Girl was here for? She might ask,– But she didn't. She went on eating.

...

"Say, didn't I look good in my pistol last night?" The little Mail Corporal stretched out in the armchair. Girl, lookin' at him...

"Is that German girl still in the guard-house?" she said.

"He's got her locked up in a room up 'bove the Post Office. That 'uz the key I brought him. Cryin' awful she wuz up there today, too,–" On the piano the Bugler pounded out his only tune. 'Smile a while, we-e-e'll,–' he paused studying the notes. "The German priest was up today," said Crispie, "kicked up an awful fuss about her. But the Cap'n, he wants to reform the town, I reckon." 'We'll sing so merrily,' chanted the Bugler. "Don't seem to me that he ought to keep a young girl like that locked up all night. I live down to her house,– the old lady's most crazy." 'Smile a while...' Damn that Bugler... "'Tain't right," said the Corporal, "but it ain't none o' my business." He looked at her. Didn't she know the Cap'n would do any God's thing she wanted? Anne looked back at him. What was he thinking behind that queer look?

"Nor mine," she said...

...

Sunday. No drill. The soldiers sat about the canteen. Anne sat in the sunlight on the doorstep, sewing a button on a man's blouse. Her mother,– sewing always reminded her of her mother. Or was it Sunday? Sunday still made people homesick, even after all these years... 'Wollen Sie mir gütigst erlauben, Fräulein,–' Anne looked up. A German man in a frock coat, his hair standing like a stiff brush, – talking, bowing: 'if you will me very kindly allow on the Piano to play. The Schoolmaster, my father,–'

"Yes," said Anne, "go on." She waved at the piano. The stiff, quaint figure seated itself on the stool. Long, supple hands touched the keys, running up and down. A magic... A thrill, spreading on the sweet summer air... Anne sat, head back against the door jamb.

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Schubert's 'Impromptu,'– how did he know it was Josiah's favorite? Life, raised above itself by Beauty... Mendelssohn's 'Song without Words...' So this man wanted his piano, loved it, yearned for it, through the trembling music... The last note lingered, was gone. 'Oh, danke sehr!' 'Bitte, Gnädiges Fräulein!' The stiff figure made a low bow, stalked off up the road toward the schoolhouse.

"Aw, say," Crispie tipped his hat back, "I'd sooner hear Tully playin' 'Smile a While.'" The Bugler was already seated at the piano.

"You've said it, boy!" said Cleary...

...

Supper. The officers' mess was silent. Sunday got them, too... Sunday, Gosh, the Division Chaplain... Anne had forgotten. "Will you have Church-Call blown at seven?" she asked the Captain. The Captain blushed. Forgotten all about religion,– Stupid of him,– girls always liked religion... Prayer meetings at home, Milly,–

"If you want the men to go to church, they'll be there," he said. The Girl, laughing...

"I'm not so sure!" she answered...

...

Anne turned seven chairs toward the piano, put out seven hymn books. That would be about the number that would come, out of two hundred... A motor-cycle snorting, stopping. The Division Chaplain came in, suave, good-looking. 'Ah, Miss Wentworth,–' From outside, the steady tramp, tramp, tramp of soldiers, marching,– good Heavens, so they were marching off somewhere, they wouldn't be here... What? Through the door? Clatter, clatter, the column came in. The soldiers spread themselves on chairs, on tables, on the floor. The Captain, looking at her. What the Girl wanted, she should have as long as he was,– She fled into the kitchen. The Top Sergeant marched in after her, holding his arm up.

"Anything the matter with your arm, Sergeant?" Anne laughed,– wooden soldiers used to keep their arms,–

"Been in this man's army fifteen years," the Sergeant, spluttering, "an' this is the first God damn time I ever been marched to church. Whyn't he blow Church-Call? He blows Assembly, an' then he lines us up, an': 'There's goin' ter be church ter the Y.M.C.A.' he says, 'Everyone who don't wanter go raise his right hand-left-face-forward-march!' An' down we come. I'm goin' ter keep my God damn hand up till this here preacher gets through." Y.M.C.A. girl, laughing... 'Near-rer my God to Thee,' the soldiers' voices, droning...

"Oh," said Anne, "I see."

...

"A very impressive service, Miss Wentworth. Wonderful attendance!" The Division Chaplain pressed Anne's hand. "I can see your influence has,–"

"Listen," said Anne, "give the General a message for me, will you?"

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Have to do something to undo this day's work... "Ask him if I can have his Mary Pickford movie for tomorrow?"

...

A lovely summer's morning. The men were sitting in a field near the road, the Captain talking to them. He stopped as Anne walked past, toward the canteen. The soldiers, looking at her, silent. Then: 'Who Won the Wa-ar?' a falsetto voice, from somewhere... 'Silence!' The Captain's voice, sharp. The Captain, pacing up and down till she got by...

...

Anne made an extra tank of lemonade that morning. They would be hot, after those manœuvres they'd been doing... Hurry, before they came back... The soldiers walked past the door, faces averted. They went into the beer saloon next door. Anne could hear curses, breaking glass, hoarse laughter. No one came to the canteen. She went back, after lunch. The place was empty. No cigarette ash... Every magazine in place... She walked to the Post Office.

Cleary sat in a doorway.. Here come the Girl, Christ... 'Hello' she was saying... He spat into the gutter. Girls wuz all right, until they started makin' the orficers crazy, an' then,– Well, let 'em have her...

Anne went on. Men watched her go by, said nothing. But the Mail Corporal grinned. Here was one friend... "What's the matter with everyone?" Anne asked him.

"I guess they're off the Y!" The Corporal tipped his hat back. The Cap'n could fall in love with this girl if he wanted to,– that was his affair... But he didn't need to take it out of the God damn soldiers... 'Was it that church business?' she was askin'... "Yeah. An' then I guess the Cap'n bawled 'em out fer somethin' they said this mornin',–" Why, the Girl felt bad,– Why, tears in her eyes... She turned.

"Oh, I see," she said, "that's it..."

...

No use to stay here... She walked to her billet. This thing had got too deep for her... Why did the Captain,– Cleary, on that doorstep ... Mustn't look at him... Eyes front. Cleary, talking to a German girl, and laughing... Cleary watched her. Like to run out and tell her he hadn't meant nothin' when he called this,– By God, no! If this here Captain was so touchy about Her, he could have Her... Like to, – like to put your God damn arm tight round her, hurt her... Feel her wriggle... God, you'd kill any other guy that tried to,– "Spazieren?" he said to a Fräulein in the window. Hoped the Girl heard him...

...

Anne bolted up the stairs and slammed the door of her room. She lit a cigarette. What was the matter with the whole thing? The Captain wanted to help her, and yet he did things,– In love with her perhaps? No, he was a nice man, and he was married... Only stupid...

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Only trying too hard to make the soldiers,– If only there were someone you could talk to,– Knock at the door. 'Herein!'

A Y.M.C.A. man's head,– thank God her cigarette had gone out,– 'General sent you up a movie,' he was saying... 'Fine!' Anne put her hat on. 'And say, the Y.M.C.A. has sent you up some ice cream.' The Y.M.C.A. man sniffed. Say, this room smelled of cigarette smoke ... Queer kind of girl the Y. sent,– 'Thank God,' the girl was saying, 'Thank God!'

...

Anne walked up to the mess. No matter if the soldiers didn't speak, – pretty soon they'd see that sign up: 'ICE CREAM.' Summer,– and two years since these young men had tasted ice cream... She handed a bowl of it to the orderly at the mess. Orderly's face, black... Something the matter,– A new Captain. Sitting in the old Captain's place at the end. The old Captain standing, pulling her chair out. 'Meet Captain Kent.' Beads of perspiration on his forehead,– 'He's come to replace,–' He couldn't say me...

"How do you do?" Anne shook hands with a dapper, smooth-browed youngster. Captain Sage standing, holding her chair out, eyes glued to its seat... "Really?" He shook his head. Chin trembling... Everyone standing, waiting... She sat down. "I've brought you up some ice cream," she said, "The Y. sent..."

...

A hundred men were lined up outside the canteen. 'When do we eat?' they shouted as she went past. 'Say, le'me lift that!' Cleary grinning, helping... The soldiers scuffed as they moved in. Kinda good to be back,– home this... Acted kinda mean about the Girl this morning... And here she'd went and got 'em ice cream! And a movie! Old Cleary, slappin' the table: 'You don't need no change, boys,' he was yellin', 'The Y.M.C.A. is *givin'* you this here ice cream!'

...

The long, narrow mess shack, darkened by blankets, filled with the steady clicking of the moving picture. She'd had it in the mess shack so the sergeants could come,– sergeants wouldn't go inside the Y.M... Two hundred men, silent, watching... Anne sat near the door,– the air was better... Outside, the clinging dusk of northern summer... Inside, on the screen, a golden-haired girl, lying in bed, very frail, very feeble. And the men, silent, homesick... Anne sighed. A figure stumbled up the aisle, rushed past her out the doorway. The Captain. She watched him go down the hill toward the canteen. Anne got up, quietly, and went out. He might be leaving,– she must pay her mess bill...

The Company Cook jammed his elbow into Private Cleary. He tossed his head toward the girl in the blue apron walking down the pathway. 'Huh, whad'I tell yer?' he said. 'No chanst for you, boy!'

"Oh, Hell!" said Private Cleary...

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The Captain sat before the stove in the canteen, silent, his head in his hands. The place was dark. Anne lit some candles, made a fire,– a fire would be cheerful and the June night was chilly. Why didn't he move, say something? Anne pulled another chair up, sat down next him. The Captain stared at the red glow in the stove door. The Girl was sorry... That was all,– Just sorry... Lord, how he hated people to be sorry! He'd been afraid that she might go away and leave him... And now he was going... Replaced... God... Why? Why? He trembled. Alone with Her... Alone. He had never been alone with Her. Her... Her... 'Before you go,' she said, 'I'd like to pay my mess bill.' He shook his head. Women were trivial... Never saw underneath the surface... God, if she knew,–

"I don't want it." His lips, trembling.

"But suppose your wife was eating round with,–" Anne stopped. Heavens, what was the matter with the man? Tears in his eyes... His face working strangely.

"My wife's dead. I got a letter two weeks ago from her mother." He got up, walked to the piano, laid his face down against a pile of music. His shoulders, shaking... Anne stood behind him. You couldn't tell him how much you were sorry... Touch only could communicate emotion... The man was crying, sobbing... It was as if the solid earth were cracking...

Feet, tramping down the hill. Soldiers whistling, talking. End of that movie must have been more cheerful... The Captain turned, walked to the kitchen. She followed him to the bottom of the steep stair that led up to the empty billet in the garret. He had given his own billet to the new man. Back to her, he stood a minute. The end of everything... He raised his foot, heavily, to the stair... Went up... The end... The end... 'Good night,' the Girl was saying...

Men thronged the canteen. The Bugler sat down at the piano. 'Smile – a While, we'll – sing so Merrily' he pounded. Anne suddenly was laughing. Laughing...

"Say, where's that lemonade we didn't get this morning?" shouted Cleary...

...

The Captain was still there next day at lunch, sitting, morose. Captain Kent, cheerful. Would she walk up to the outposts with him? Sure! Fine! The meals were filled with talk now... The Captain's face flushed. His Girl, going with that damned,– How should she know that he'd been sent here to get him out of a mess with a German woman down at Arlsbach? Woman had started talking,– there'd been a scandal... He pushed his chair back. The others put on caps, walked out into the sunshine,– the Girl and the Lieutenants and the new Captain. Anne looked back at him. He was still sitting, gazing at the empty dishes...

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Perhaps he'd be gone when they got back... Anne walked behind Lieutenant Bright and Captain Kent on the familiar woodpath. Somewhere a cuckoo, calling... She hoped he would be... Life would be easier without,– 'You'll go home?' he'd asked, that morning in the canteen, almost pleading... 'Oh, no,' she'd said. 'I'll stay until the Germans sign the treaty.' The cuckoo, calling, calling...

"Think you're on the right path, Lieutenant?" Captain Kent stopped. Hell of a long way out to these outposts... Hate to have to show 'em to some damned Colonel on a dark night... But the soldiers would know,– soldiers in an outfit like this knew everything you didn't...

"Well, I'm pretty sure,–" the Lieutenant looked around him. Trees... Trees... Where in Hell *was* the outpost?

"We should have turned back there." The Y.M.C.A. girl pointed. "I've been out there often," she said...

...

Morning. Anne made lemonade and opened cookies. Hadn't seen Sage that day... Perhaps he'd gone... Like MacLeod, like James Eaton, like,– 'Say, where's the Captain's billet?' An orderly stood there, panting. 'Upstairs, why?' 'This guy Kent, he's ordered away again. We got the Cap'n back, in charge of the Comp'ny.' He bolted up the stairway.

"Oh," said Anne, "oh."

...

Not so easy... Anne's feet dragged on the stair up to her billet. Lunch, with the Captain sitting, smiling at you... Richardson, looking at Bright, and Bright at Richardson... Knowing... The men, grinning, saying 'Well, he ain't a goin' to leave us,'– meaning 'leave you...' Knowing... She had known all along that the man loved her. You always knew it... But she had known, comfortably, that he was married... Having that kind love you, just a little, meant that you got things for the soldiers... Meant he made things easy... Now, his wife was dead, and there was danger... If only you had somebody to talk to... Anne strode to the window. White road, shimmering in the afternoon heat... Six miles along that road, the town of Evelyn Tollet... Anne took her whipcord uniform from its hanger, pulled her gingham dress off...

...

White road. One step at a time, it went behind you. Man, who could not go faster than a snail's pace, yet with intelligence to invent flying... Men, who had power to reason all things, and yet who mobilized armies, killed each other... Men, who could love ideals, yet not stop loving women. You must have come three miles... If only you had Cleary to sing to you... 'Oh, it's not the pack that you carry on your back...' Even when you only sang it with your breath, it made your feet move faster. White road... Hot... 'Oh, it's not the crust of

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khaki-colored dust,–' White road... White road... Three more miles...

...

"It's all bunk," said Anne. "We come out here and pretend that everything's lovely, like the books that Mrs. Jessie Dodkin writes about us,– like *all* the rot they print back in the U.S.,– and all the time we're only messing everything up,– making them jealous, ready to kill each other. I think I'll chuck it." She lay on the bed in Evelyn Tollet's billet, feet resting against the wall, her collar open. Those six miles had been hot ones.

"Nonsense," said Evelyn, rummaging in her drawer for a clean collar. "You're doing a wonderful job out there. The General told me,–"

"Bosh," said Anne. "You know, Evelyn, we live up here and pretend to be lovely, innocent, young things, and not to notice anything. We know what goes on. That officer, that has the billet under mine, for instance. He's in a mess with a girl in France, and in another mess with a German girl in the next town. He's a rotter, and he knows I know it. Yet I go on eating with him at each meal. We're not reforming them. It's bunk to pretend we are."

"You know the difference between a town with a woman in it, and a town without one." Evelyn bounced up on the bed and lay, her head against the footboard. Must cure this 'cafard...' Not the first time she'd seen girls get discouraged...

"That's all on the surface," Anne said. "They do the same things when we're there, only they do them under cover."

"Now, look here, Anne. You know that in every town we live in, there's a few of the nicest ones who stick round, and watch us, and help us, and tell us we remind them,–"

"Yes, and fall a little bit in love with us," said Anne, "and then get jealous, suspicious,– set the whole town on edge,–"

"Falling in love with you won't hurt them," Evelyn, laughing, "falling in love makes women miserable. Men it exalts. And they get over it fast enough the minute you're gone,–"

"But damn it," said Anne, "I'm not gone."

"Now look here," Evelyn bent forward, eager. "Where did you ever find an army where women could go out with the troops the way we've done. No other nation could get away with it."

"Old nations are too wise to try it," Anne said. She lit another cigarette. "It's because we're young we do that kind of fool thing. Elinor of Aquitaine went on a crusade once, with a whole bunch of women,– she kept the morale zooming. France was young then. Joan of Arc,– it's not hard at all to see what she did. She broke her sword, didn't she, over the backs of the prostitutes that followed the army? First decent woman they'd seen in years. You'd make a good Joan of Arc yourself, Evelyn,– you on your motor-cycle."

"No, I wouldn't," Evelyn's eyes grew dreamy, distant. "Neither

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would any of us, our vision isn't great enough. What she did was to have a vision greater than the soldiers. Greater than it's possible for men to have when they're in the midst of weariness, discomfort, danger. Soldiers can't see beyond the moment. Their feet are always wet, or they are hungry. If they look back, it makes them homesick. If they look forward,– there's Death... They've got to live in the present,– wet boots, corn willy, mess kits sozzled in greasy water. Empty heads, strong muscles. What we do is to remind them just a little of the past and of the future, the things they're going through all this mess for. If we're any good, we keep a vision just a little bit, before them. We make them respect themselves." Loud banging at the door. 'Say, Miss Tollet,' an orderly calling, 'The Major's been waitin' supper half an hour for you. He wants to know, are you comin'?' "Oh, yes," said Evelyn, "Tell him there'll be two." She poured out water, and slowly washed her hands in the tin basin.

"Well. Maybe," Anne said...

...

Anne rode back on the truck that delivered Paris papers to the outposts. The boy who ran the truck grinned at Evelyn Tollet who stood, waving good-bye on the sidewalk. The engine coughed as the Ford went to second. "That Miss Tollet's all right," snapped the soldier. "Boy, howdy! It sure does make a difference to have a girl in these towns!"

"Does it?" said Anne.

...

Captain Sage walked up and down the mess, his hands behind him. He stopped at the window. Street, covered with broom marks. In a minute the Girl would be coming up it... He paced. The Girl... Not yet... The Girl... The future... Ah, the future... That was at last free! Where was she? Lieutenant Bright, coughing... To show he was there, was hungry... Lieutenants Richardson and Burt, hanging their caps up, rubbing their hands. Glad, that the Girl was not there,– they could tell dirty stories... Where was the Girl? Ill, perhaps,– 'Turner!' The orderly set the bread down. 'Yes, Sir!' 'Go to Miss Wentworth's billet. Tell her supper's,–' 'Yes, Sir!' Turner walked out, smiling. Could walk back with the Y. girl... But she wasn't in her billet. He came without her. The Cap'n, up there in the window, worried... 'Not there, Sir! Will the Captain begin?'

The Captain pulled his chair out, banged it, sat down. She'd gone ... She'd left them... His fault,– he'd gazed at her,– made her unhappy... Shouldn't have showed his feelings. Should have kept things going easy, friendly. Richardson, eating venison, telling a smutty story... The Girl... Gone...

...

Anne swept the canteen. Summer sun, slanting, blue, through the broad door, dropping a square of light on the canteen floor. Sud-

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denly, a shadow in the sunlight. Anne looked up. The man they called 'Pete' stood, long and lanky in the doorway, his tin hat slanted forward.

Pete looked at the girl in the blue apron. Since that first night that she'd ast him to dance, he'd kinda wanted,– She didn't have no eyes for him, though... 'Twas always Cleary... Cleary, smarter'n what he was... He bent down. From his arms long legs scrabbled against the floor boards. A tiny creature stood there, soft, unsteady, speckled. A little thing, with great ears, bright eyes, a moist nose that sniffed upward. 'A baby deer! You darling!' The Girl dropped down on her knees before it. Pete grabbed his tin hat off.

"We shot a doe this mornin' up on the outpost," he said. "The Cap'n, he wants to keep his mess in fresh meat. A foun' this little thing a runnin' about. A couldn't bear to kill it. A tho't perhaps you'd, you'd,–" She did,– she was a kissin' of its head. By God, he'd got ahead of Cleary this time... Little crittur a lickin' the Girl's finger... 'Are you hungry?' she was sayin' to it...

...

Sweeping out. Clearing up. Getting fresh flowers. Roses blooming, now, in all the hedges,– Anne stuck long sprays of them into the blue jars. Bees, buzzing... German girls, white kerchiefs over their heads, walking past in great boots, carrying hayrakes. Summer. Life, settling into its old stride... The Captain calm, impersonal and friendly ... The storm all over... Years, one had lived here between the green bowl of the valley and the forest... One might go on forever... A shadow in the door. The Captain came in. 'We're leaving this afternoon at three.' Anne laughed. Just as you'd thought it would go on forever...

"And what becomes of me?" she said. The Captain's face stern...

"You come with us. The French cavalry are coming in here," he said...

...

Anne put books into boxes, folded up curtains. The Y. man from Battalion Headquarters, puffing in: 'Denton's my name...' He'd send a truck at two. She must be ready. Packing things into cocoa kettles ... Curtains, dishes, magazines, cups, sofa pillows, well worn... Throwing out flowers, returning milk jugs to the German housewives... Giving them soap,– laughing, patting their shoulders,– this war would not be a bad one... 'Ach, Fräulein, all wars are bad...' Trying to get ten men to carry back the piano,– she had promised,– No time now to carry back pianos... In doorways, German women, weeping: 'Ach, Fräulein, wohin gehen Sie?' They didn't know,– nobody ever does know in war... Moving, that's all. Great to move! Comb, toothbrush, soap, clean collars, night dress in the musette bag,– that would take you to Berlin... The rest in the trunk and bed roll... That would get lost... Hurry,– ready at two.

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She sat on her trunk, ate crackers. Two o'clock, no truck... Three o'clock,– the company marching down the town street, faces blank, fixed bayonets slanting up across their shoulders. German women, crying, waving... They marched past. They didn't glance once at the German women... 'You'll come with us?' The Captain fell out for a second by the Y. steps. 'Well, I'm not going to stay with the French cavalry,' the Girl said...

...

Horses, coming down the white road. Bobbing above them, a forest of tall pikes. Carrying the pikes, little men in grey-blue. Bronzed faces under helmets. Pikes at different angles, horses at different gaits, ambling, jogging. Men hunched down in their saddles, bored with riding... Bored with Life,– 'Hey, dere, Froggy, cigarette?' Long arms in khaki, holding up paper packages. Little blue men suddenly eager, jerking their bridles, reaching: 'Vas-y, mon gars!' 'Atta boy, Frog!' 'Jamais de refus,– un bon paquet de cibiches!' [1] Sharp eyes turned toward Anne, black eyebrows lifted: 'Cochons d'Américains. Du moment qu'ils ont un jupon,– sont contents!' Heads nodding, smiling... 'Never seen them God damned Frawgs that they couldn't use a fag off'n yer.' 'Not 'nless they figger they gotta pay for it.' Laughter...

"Oh, it's not the pack that you carry on your back,–"

Cleary's tenor, ringing...

...

A field by a spruce forest. Long rows of pup tents against the dark trees... Chow wagons, with blue smoke curling upwards. Men's voices... The smell of beans, of coffee... Men's footsteps, the feel of their activity... A laugh... A whistled tune... A curse... Grey-brown figures, fading into the field, into the forest... 'I have a billet for you in the farmhouse yonder.' The Captain stood beside Anne. 'I've had your bedding roll put in there.' Mess call, jerking. Footsteps hurrying, cups rattling... The Captain watched Anne unlimbering her mess kit. 'It's too bad to make you eat that way.'

"I love it," said Anne...

...

She sat on the steps of the farmhouse, sewing service stripes on soldiers' blouses. Soldiers on the ground round her, hands clasping knees: ''Fwe don't have them things on, the Heinies might take us fer a God damn rookie...'

"Miss Wentworth." Lieutenant Richardson stood in the dusk. The soldiers backed off. Richardson held out a bunch of letters. "I've got to know what's in these. We might,– go over the top tomorrow. Something might,– happen. There's no one in the outfit except one enlisted man who knows French." He fixed his shifty eye on Anne.

[1] 'That's a thing you never refuse,– a good package of fags!'

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Damn this girl,– the Cap'n givin' her the on'y decent billet, and him and Bright and Burt all on the floor in the Cap'n's own room... Whyn't he sleep in the God damn billet with her, if he was so,– Anne stood up.

"Give them to me," she said, "I'll write it for you."

...

She closed the door. She found the candle in her musette bag, lit it. Beyond the candlelight, in the room's corners, mysterious darkness ... The shadow of her head, colossal, wavering on the white wall. Before her, scrawly writing. The girl's parents had turned her out... She stayed now with an aunt of her father in a ruined village near to Châlons... Many days had she walked to arrive here... 'When our child comes, you will rejoin me here, n'est-ce-pas? We shall take our baby to America, where all the world is happy,–' A bugle,– Anne raised her head. 'Fading light – Dims the sight – And a star, in the sky, gleaming bright – From afar, drawing nigh – Falls the night...' She drew a pencil and paper out of her bag and began writing...

...

Anne sat in the field among the soldiers. They had been ready at six o'clock to go on trucks. It was ten now. 'Say, where do you suppose the God damn Y. thinks you are?' said the Bugler. 'Boy,' Cleary spat, 'that outfit ain't capable of thinkin'!'

"Lieutenant Richardson!" Anne called him as he went past. Cleary watched her as she handed him some papers. Well, anyhow, the Girl had that guy's number... Trucks came. The soldiers piled in. Anne on the front seat of the first truck with the Captain. Familiar, grinding jiggle, rattling your teeth, making your cheeks shake... They stopped outside a town. A Ford truck stopped beside them, and old Denton jumped out. "Gotta get outa there and come with us!" he shouted. "Major don't want you ridin' with the soldiers." Anne felt the Captain stiffen. 'You,–' he began, his face crimson... She touched his knee gently as she edged past him, jumped down. She held her hand up.

"Good-bye."

...

Roads, crowded with soldiers, marching... The Ford coughing, snorting, jolting past them. Everyone moving. Nobody knowing where they were going. Aides, tearing past in motor-cycles. The air, electric. Soldiers, grey-green, marching together, bayonets slanted upwards, helmets tilted forward,– hard-boiled,– Marines,– a Captain waving,– Donovan... Again...

Mühlhau. Y.M.C.A. Headquarters, crowded. Suit cases, duffle bags, bedding rolls, Y.M.C.A. girls, Y.M.C.A. men, standing, talking, talking... 'A rotten shame they wouldn't let us stay with our men,' the girls, angry, 'now if they pull another war we'll miss,–' The Reverend Gates edged his way through. 'But where are we going to

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put 'em?' he was saying. 'Thirty-six people, only eleven billets,–' Anne and two other girls from her battalion followed him to his desk: 'Our outfits will give us billets,' they said, 'where are they?' 'At Zahn, but the Major doesn't want,–' 'We'll keep out of the Major's way, can we go?' Gates, weakening... Twenty-six girls and Room 18 with three beds... 'We-e-ell, ye,–' The girls were gone...

They flung their bags into a Ford truck. Hurry, before the others,– This damn war might begin before you,– This was the last war that you'd ever have a chance to,– The driver grinned, spat in the gutter. Funny how these girls liked to stay with them bums.. 'Hurry,' the girls kept saying to him, 'Hurry! Hurry!'

...

The Ford rolled along a high ridge. Below it, fields, grey in the dim light... On the fields, rows of pup tents and fires, glowing... Silhouettes of men in helmets against the grey smoke. Slowing, for a crossroad. A man jumped on, and stood beside Anne on the truck's step. The Captain. His familiar hands holding the upright. Eyes, meeting hers, staying... Life, exciting...

"I knew you'd come," he said. The Girl here, next him... At last... God, he'd been afraid,– That afternoon, Hell,– but she was here... Here... Looking at him, laughing... A child, this Girl...

"I darn near didn't," she said...

...

Anne sat at lunch. Here they all were, a different German house, but the same food, same people. The Captain at the end, silent, smiling. Richardson and Burt spooning in their vegetables, silent. This was home... Home wasn't places any longer, it was people... The orderly, winking as he edged his way behind the Captain... Bright next her, talking: 'Say, Cap'n, you ought to have seen the way those French officers did their billeting!' Bright had stayed behind in Sonnenfeld as Town Major. 'They lined 'em up in the street, an' then they asked me for the officers' billets. We went and found them. 'N then the Frog Captain came out and he said, "Hip, hip," or some'n like that, and the Frogs just rushed off and rustled for themselves.' Richardson and Burt looked at each other.

'Gosh,' said Bright. 'Gosh!'

...

Band, booming in the town square outside the big tent. In the tent, half dark, men grabbing the four girls, treading on their feet, whirling them round. Air thick, from many throats, gasping, panting. The smell of perspiration... Sound of a whistle. A strange man grabbed Anne, puffing. Cleary, charging through the crowd, hand on the strange man like a vice, tearing him from her, flinging him to one side. Gonna dance with his Girl tonight... Might be the last night... Tully, the little bugler, getting jostled, struggling to reach her. Tomorrow,– Hell! prob'ly be pushin' up the daisies by this time tomorrow...

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Like to touch the Girl just once:.. There! You had her... Pete, standing by the quavering tent wall, looking. The Girl, dancin' with that slob Tully... Christ, how you'd like to put your arm around her... She'd ast you to dance once, and you hadn't wanted,– God now you,– Not scared of that guy from F Comp'ny that had her... The lousy,– there she was lookin' at yer, smilin'... God... Get out of this tent... Get where you could breathe... Tomorrow night,– Watchin' the blood spurt... Christ, you got so you liked to watch the blood spurt... Pete pushed his cap forward, strolled across the town street. Go git a drink o' Snapps around the corner...

Outside the tent, the sweet air of a summer evening. Men sitting at little tables drinking lemonade. Cleary led Anne out, pulling out a chair for her at a table with familiar faces. 'Say, your feet'll be broke if you don't set down!' Staff car, grindin' up the hill, slow... Big fat Corps Commander, losin' an eye from lookin' at 'em... The old boy wished *he* was settin' next to a nice girl...

"Do you think we'll really advance tomorrow?" Anne said...

...

In the staff car, the Corps Commander grunted. Didn't look like a war, this... Looked like a cabaret show... Soldiers dancing, sitting in the dusk at little tables with flowers on them... Music... Men's voices, singing... Laughter... Girls, talking to the soldiers at the tables, making them laugh... Damn nice to sit at tables with pretty women... The General snorted...

...

The German Mayor, a small, dark man, stopped at the corner, looking. Mustn't appear to look... Would there be war tomorrow? War, in his own country? The German priest stood there, silent, watching. Mustn't let the Amerikaners think you were watching... Tomorrow,– Ach, he knew what War was...

"What then, Father, will the Amerikaners really advance?" the Mayor asked. "If they were to fight tomorrow, would they tonight dance?"

"Ach," said the priest, "they can dance and fight too, these young men. When they marched into Vaux last June I heard them singing!"

...

Morning. The tent, with upturned chairs scattered, dirt, disorder. Four girls, sweeping, slowly. Feet, hurting... Back and arms aching... Hot sun on canvas... Air, hot... The perspiration trickling... "You girls gotta go back!" Old Denton marched in. "Got orders from G 1. I'm takin' your place. You got a decent billet?"

"No," the girls laughed, "one room in the schoolhouse,– one bed, made of chicken wire. A mattress with cooties in it,–"

"Good Lord!" said Mr. Denton...

...

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Morning. Above Anne's head the slanting gables of Room 18. No use getting up... Nothing to do here... In the two beds across the room blankets dishevelled over Miss Wright and Miss Beal. Miss Beal getting up. Washing in the china basin, brushing her teeth, spitting in the pail... Anne squirmed. Stay in bed all your life if it would keep you from spitting in these damn pails... Twenty centuries of pails in Europe... Making the world safe for pails to spit in... 'Oh dear,' Miss Wright stretched, 'do you think they'll ever let us go back to our boys?' 'They say if the Germans sign, we'll go back,' said Miss Beal. 'And if they don't sign, we'll advance with the Generals and things, so we'll be safe.'

"What became of that girl," Anne broke in, "who used to sleep here? A stenographer, she was, or something,–"

"O-oh. Didn't you hear about her?" Miss Cox raised her head up in the bed next. "She went to Brussels with a Brigadier-General. She got sent home."

"Oh, did she?" Anne said...

...

A great shed in Mühlhau. In the shed Y.M.C.A. women making doughnuts, cocoa. Anne stoked a fire under a cocoa tin. Smoke filled her eyes. Fun to make cocoa in your own kitchen, with the boys watching,– a sort of goddess to the men you cooked for... But to cook here, and see the Y. men come in on trucks and take the things off,– nothing in it...

Anne stopped in at the Y. Headquarters to ask for her mail.

"Oh, say, Miss Wentworth, there was a Captain Somebody in here this morning, lookin' for you." Smoot winked. No matter what the Captain's name was,– these girls always knew the one you meant,– life on those outposts must be one, sweet romance... "Told him you'd gone home. Thought you was one of the ones went back to Paris."

"No," said Anne. The Captain, looking for her... Had managed to get away, come all this distance... "No, I'm still here."

...

She went upstairs slowly. That was bad... She'd made a mess of this job... Shouldn't have let him,– How could she tell his wife would go and die, though? Nonsense, he didn't care about her,– he must have come on duty,– he never left the outfit except on duty... She'd thought once he did care,– but it was rot,– not one word of anything but common sense had ever passed between them... They'd never even been alone together... Why, she didn't even know the man's first name,– She opened the door of Room 18, dropped onto the hard bed. Feet, aching... 'We've got to go to a dance tonight,'– Miss Cox, lying on the next bed.

"Gosh," said Anne, "it's a great war..."

...

Band playing, whistle blowing... Soldiers grabbing the Y.M.C.A.

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girls' shoulders, pulling them fiercely. A French sergeant bowed low before Anne. French tanks were waiting in the town to go before the armies in the advance. Evelyn Tollet had seen the men and asked them to come. 'Mademoiselle, permettez...' He put his hand behind her. It was like flying... Il était maître de danse, he said, avant la guerre... This was his forte,– He floated to the music. 'But tell me, Mademoiselle,' – the man talking swiftly, his mouth near her ear,– 'that pretty lady there, the blonde who dances with my comrade, is it that she comes often to dance with the soldiers?' Anne looked up. Emmy Jane, dancing with a French corporal... Emmy Jane's laugh, rippling... 'Yes, often, that is her work.'

"Tiens!" The Sergeant held her away from him a moment, looking. "Mais, elle est la maîtresse du Général, n'est-ce-pas? Elle habite là-haut,–"

"Ah, no," said Anne. "Not at all. She and the other Mademoiselle visit the General. He sends them in his automobile to sing for the soldiers,– he is their friend."

"A-a-a-ah!" said the Sergeant. The whistle. Soldiers grabbing Anne, standing there panting, glowering at each other. The Frenchman tossed his head back, eyes flashing, hand at his hip. 'Mais, sont-ils fous?' One might fight a duel for less,–

"It is nothing, Monsieur," said Anne, "it is our system..."

...

She watched him bow low before Miss Cox. Watched the girl swirl off, swooping, dipping among the dancers. The whistle. Three soldiers grabbing Miss Cox's shoulders... 'I'm going to dance this whole number with this man,' Anne heard her,– 'he doesn't understand our way of doing...' The soldiers glowered at her as she danced off... 'Jees Krise...' they muttered...

...

'There's no-o place like home...' Music slowing. Thank God the thing was over... Anne wandered toward the door. Crowd in the doorway, man in the middle of the crowd there talking... 'We know wha' we think uva girl tha'll dance with a God damned Frog ahead of a honest to God American,'– man had been drinking... Evelyn Tollet, pushing her way among the soldiers, patting the man's shoulder, taking his hand, leading him, like a small child, toward the doorway. 'Our allies... visiting us,' Anne heard her saying, 'must be polite...' 'Polite, Hell!' The drunken voice came through the open window from the courtyard. The yard was filled with soldiers. They stood, watching the doorway. 'We'll show them God damned Frogs...' A growl went up among the soldiers outside. They stood there, waiting...

"Bonsoir, Mademoiselle!" The French Sergeant stood before Anne, saluting, with his palm out. "We appreciate profoundly, my comrade and I,–"

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"Don't let him go," whispered Evelyn Tollet. "There'll be a fight. Tell them to wait."

A huge, red-faced American sergeant stood in the hall door. Gotta keep these guys in the yard from comin' in here... Whyn't these girls clear outa here? Gonna be trouble... Miss Tollet, pattin' him on the elbow... 'Will you do something for me?'

"Yes, Ma'am." Have to do things for Miss Tollet,– Girl'd stuck by 'em through the whole damn war... Gen'ral hisself stepped round fer Miss Tollet...

"I want you and the Corporal here to take these two French soldiers out the back way. See them inside the armored cars before you leave them."

"Yes, Ma'am!" Gawd damn Frogs, the more of them got beat up, the better... Not doin' it fer them two... "Come on, Frog!" The Sergeant jerked his head back. "Snap out of it! March!" The Frenchmen followed him down a flight of stairs toward the cellar...

Anne walked to the front door, stood on its top step. Men, watching the doorway from the darkness, waiting... "Now who was it," she said, "who said they'd take me home?" Ten men stepped forward. "Oh, yes..."

...

Evening. Anne wandered in the twilight. How much longer could you stand this waiting? Another day of doughnuts, and she'd go A.W.O.L.,– try to get to Wiesbaden or Ems... Why, Anne stopped. There was a Moving Picture Theatre, outdoors,– soldiers sitting on a sloping field back from the white screen, a truck, projecting a picture. Y.M.C.A. painted on the truck. She walked toward it. Nice, to sit outdoors and watch a moving picture... She stepped in among the soldiers, sat down. They looked at her. Queer looks,– something,– She looked up at the screen. A girl,– heavens, this was,– Heavens, she'd heard they had a film to improve the soldiers' morals... Silhouette of some officer standing by the screen, saying nothing, waiting. Gosh... Anne got up, stumbled past the soldiers, rushed out to the darkness. Gosh...

...

Morning. Anne stood on the sidewalk outside the Y. Headquarters, eating cherries. Spitting the stones, watching them bounce down the worn, yellow stones that made the pavement. Ought to go make doughnuts... Wouldn't... Couldn't watch another piece of dough floating in grease,– not if the men starved... There was that Y. truck that took the improvement-to-the-morals movie. Cheeks, growing hot,– Gosh... Round the truck came a Y. man in a trench coat.

"Good morning," said the Y. man. Good to see a nice girl... Got boring lecturing to the soldiers about venereal diseases... Wonder,– if this girl would go somewhere for luncheon,– 'Bad Ems,' perhaps, – town probably not so 'bad' as people thought it... Anyway, this

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was a nice girl... Wonderful how nice girls could go anywhere, see nothing...

"Good morning," Anne said. The doctor who'd brought the little checkered pamphlets,– she remembered... 'I'm going to Ems,' the doctor saying, 'perhaps you'd like to come along and see it.' Anne looked at the man's eyes. They met yours, straight... Married man... Decent... Anything to get away from this place... "Why, thanks," she said, "I'd like to..."

...

Room 18 was empty when she got back. Girls gone. Bags gone. Shoes, toothbrushes, brushes and combs gone... She rushed down to Headquarters. The Little Walrus sat tipping his chair back, looking at the ceiling. 'Where are the others?' Anne asked.

"Why, they've gone back up to the outfit. Brigadier-General sent up a message that the morale was suffering considerable without the girls there. G 1 decided today to send 'em all back. Where was you? Thought you'd gone with 'em." The girl turning, bolting down the stairway. 'Good Lord!' she said. Smoot tipped his chair back. Profane, these women...

...

So, the others had gone back, without her... She wanted to go back... Didn't want to go back... Wanted,– crying, what was the matter with her? The Reverend Gates, coming upstairs, stopping her. 'No need for you to go back unless you want to, Miss Wentworth. You look tired,– I'll send you up tomorrow, or I'll send you back to Paris, whichever you,–' Anne turned. Go quickly,– don't let him see tears...

"Thanks," she said, "I'll let you know tomorrow."

...

She bought a bag of cherries at the corner, ate them, spitting the seeds out, watching the seeds bounce. People bounced, just the way the seeds did, then rolled to the roadside, lay still, forgotten... The other girls still bouncing,– Anne rolling to the,– Walk fast... To keep from crying... Soldiers out there at Zahn, seeing the girls of the other companies come back, and thinking their Girl,– 'Deserter,' they'd say... And other things,– things about the Captain. They knew more than they let on, those soldiers... If only the Y. had ordered you to go back... Horrible, this having to decide things. Long, long ago you'd wanted to make your own decisions, kicked at being ordered. Now you were incapable of deciding,– that was what War did,–

"You're coming back to us, I hope, Miss Wentworth?" The Regimental Chaplain stood in the road before her. The girl looked tired,– tears in her eyes... 'I don't know. Perhaps it's not worth,–' "Of course it's worth while. We need you up there. It won't be long now. The Germans will soon sign. I've got a car, come back with me now!"

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Anne stood, dangling a cherry. Danger,– the Captain... Playing with fire... To do the dangerous thing,– that was Youth, War... War, almost over... After it, a lifetime of Safety, of Middle Age, of Boredom ... She tossed the cherry into the field.

"Yes," she said, "I'll come."

...

Sunset. The men were finishing a game of baseball. Anne could see Miss Wright and Miss Beal sitting out there, cheering. Their men against her men. Their men were winning: 'We'll beat 'em now,– it's two to one, last half the ninth. If we can hold 'em this half, we got 'em beaten,' Anne heard them saying as she walked past...

"Say, look who's here!" Cleary stood, swinging two bats behind the batter. Pete, at the bat, not looking, a deep flush mounting to his high cheek bone... Pete, lamming a ball out, across the center fielder's head, running to first, to second. The whole team leaping from the players' bench, and yelling. The Company, on the grass behind Anne, cheering... Cleary stepped to the plate, his white teeth gleaming. Laughing at the first ball... Then, his long, lithe body swinging forward like a steel spring,– crack! Ball, bounding across the field, over a blue gate. K Company's fielder leaping the blue gate. Pete, galloping home. Cleary running from second to third, across the plate, right up to Anne, stopping, gripping her two hands, pumping, pumping, panting: "You– brought– us– luck,– that time!" he gasped. The Girl was back again... He'd won his bet,– she wan't no quitter! He'd pound Hell out of,–

Anne laughed. Her soldiers, crowding round her, shaking her hand. Team, crowding around her. 'You cert'nly done it that time,' they were saying... 'Did what?' the Girl said.

"Won that there game o' baseball!"

...

They walked up the street, the soldiers talking, laughing. Anne walked among them. Nice to be back... People who cared,– that was all that mattered. Everybody had shaken her hand except the Captain.

He turned and swung off up the street alone. God, she was here, and not gone back to Coblenz... Did she know? Had she got his letter? Army mail, slow... Had she got it, and come back to him, knowing? God...

Anne watched his stiff back walking. He didn't want her here, then... The only man who wasn't glad to see her... Soldiers, crowding round her, walking next her, talking... 'We was afraid you wasn't comin'. They told us you'd gone back to the U.S....'

Overhead an airplane, snorting, snorting, banking, close above them. From the observer's seat a man was waving. Above the town square he leaned out, dropped a bundle. Soldiers running, picking it up, tearing it open, handing out newspapers. 'GERMANS SIGN

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PEACE AT THREE,' Anne saw a headline. So it was over, over... She walked toward the billet in the schoolhouse. Knees, feeling shaky... Hitched to that treaty was a League of Nations... America's idea, imposed on the old world. Peace... The beginning of a new age... Along the dusty path great raindrops spattered. Earth smelling ominous, smelling gunpowdery. After the armistice the sun had come out. Now it was raining. Rain didn't matter. She put her face up, felt the rain against it...

...

A hollow square of soldiers on a drill field. Gentle rain falling, glistening on helmets, dripping from them... Soldiers, under the helmets, immovable, unheeding... In the middle of the hollow square some officers, a major, and four girls in grey uniforms, red triangles on their hats, standing, waiting. A limousine stopped by the roadside. Commands,– rifles clinking forward. A general walked into the square,– tall, straight, sunburned,– the General that you never saw at dances. The one the men were always saying was a 'soldier.' A command. Eight rows of soldiers melting into men, who stood there. The General's keen eyes looking at them from under deep brows.

He wanted to look into their faces once more, he said, as he had done so many times these two years,– this time in the cause of Peace and not of War. Wanted to tell them that they had gained more ground than any other brigade in the American Army. That they had taken more prisoners. That they had lost more men. Geoffrey... Anne shifted. Tears, burning your eyes... Geoffrey... Geoffrey... Wanted to tell them that they stood farther north in Germany tonight than any other regiment. What did it matter... What did it matter... 'Men!' The General turned suddenly, stood, stiff. 'I am proud of you!' Anne heard him saying, 'and I am proud to tell you so! Usually it is you who salute me. Tonight I am going to salute you!' The General saluted, stiffly. Turning, he saluted again, again, again. A command. Rifles clattering to present arms. End of the army... End of militarism... 'Would like to shake hands with every one of you,' the General saying. 'I can't do that, so I will shake hands with your Commanding Officer.' The General shaking hands with the Major, shaking hands with the three girls beside Anne, shaking hands with Anne. Tears in the man's eyes.. 'Thank you!' he was saying, 'Thank you! Thank you!'

...

Dancing. A strange placidity about the dance this evening... No grabbing this time. Under the moving boots, the wooden floor creaked gently. The soldiers stood on the sidelines, watching, smiling. No need to grab these girls, some day you'd get home... 'Gee, the war's over!' 'You cert'nly won that game for us!' 'Say, we're marchin' back to our old town tomorrow. You comin' with us?' 'Sure will be good to get outa this dump!'

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Anne only half listened. Why had the Captain stayed away from supper? 'Inspecting' they said. One of the Lieutenants could have inspected... Something more than ordinary the matter...

...

The Captain stood outside the tent. First Call had sounded,– she'd be closing up soon... Have to see her sometime... If only he hadn't written... Fool to have written... God, what would she,– There she was, with that other woman... 'Hello' she was saying, holding her hand out... He couldn't trust himself to touch it. "You'll come with us tomorrow morning?" he asked. "We're leaving at five. I've got an ambulance that you can go in." She was smiling at him, friendly, same as ever... Letter must have got lost... He needn't have been so frightened... 'The Y. is sending for all us girls at half past ten,' the other Y. girl saying...

"I guess I'll take the ambulance," the Girl said...

...

Night air, sweet with new-mown hay, drifted across the dark room in the schoolhouse. The others slept. Anne could not. She got up from the chicken-wire bed, crept to the window. The town lay, silent. Beyond it across the placid fields tall spruces pointed upward. The schoolhouse clock clanged twelve somewhere above her. First day of the new era they had fought for... A new day... The world, safe...

"What is it?" Miss Wright sat up, staring wildly in the darkness.

"Only me," Anne said...

...

Reveille sounding. The dawn, grey, cold, forbidding... The time you specially wanted to go on sleeping... Anne got up, dressed quickly, dragged her bags out to the door and down the stairway. Cleary, waiting to take them to the ambulance: "Say why don't you lemme salvage them things that's left in the Y. tent?" he said. "Lot's o' room in that bus." Anne laughed. The others sleeping... If they wanted things, they should have got up...

"Sure, go ahead," she said...

...

Sonnenfeld, empty of all save Germans. Deserted, dreary... 'Ach, Fräulein, Fräulein!' a German woman weeping, wringing her hands, 'die Franzozen,–' Anne hurried toward the hall, no time to listen. The place to sweep out, curtains to put up... Lucky to have had that ambulance,– beaten everyone to Headquarters, got all your stuff back ... Anne slammed a big tin on the stove. Make cocoa... Go out and get some flowers... Hurry, the men would be here...

They piled in, sat down on benches, in the armchair, sprawled against the tables. Took off their helmets, mopped their foreheads. 'Say, but it's nice to get home!'

"Is it?" the Girl said...

...

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"I've a new billet for you." The Captain looking at her, blushing. "I can't let you live in that place,–"

"But Frau Feldmann knows just how I like my breakfast," said Anne. Why should he blush at that, now?

"The Lieutenant who has the billet downstairs,–" the Captain stopped. Couldn't tell the Girl that... How Richardson had been drunk at Zahn and told him about a French girl he had,– About the German woman in the next town,– boasted,– "He's not, he's not–"

"But I have known that all along," the Girl said...

...

"This morning have I no egg for you, Fräulein." Frau Feldmann shook her head as she brought Anne's tray. "Die Franzozen who here were have all our hens gestolen. Not one hen have they left in the whole town! All have they killed and eaten. And the goose of the Schoolmaster has the French Oberst for his dinner had,– And all the fish from the Breeding Pond. The water have they let out, and the fish picked up,– Ach! It is frightful,–"

"That is War,–" said Anne, "in France,–"

"Ach! That do the Americans not! They pay for all. They take not beds from women and from children. But the Franzozen were not ein-quartiered,– they slept where they wanted. Ach, Fräulein," tears on the wrinkled cheeks, "terrible things have happened in this town! There has been a frightful unhappiness here. God be thanked that you here again are!" Sob, sob...

"In France,–" But this woman had not been in France...

"It is the German people who suffer, but it is not we who wanted the war. But your President will help us, Fräulein, nicht wahr?"

"Yes," said Anne, "our President will help you..."

...

"Say, there's a letter for you. The Cap'n took it over to the mess." The Mail Corporal watched her as he drank lemonade. Queer, the Cap'n had been askin' for her letters every day now... Today he'd got one, and it was from him,– his name on the corner... Written while she was gone and forwarded back here...

"Is there?" said Anne. Letter from home, perhaps. That world, dead... Her mother and Josiah, the only ones who still lived in that vast void... "Who from?" she asked.

"Well," Corporal Crispie pushed his cap back. "Well I don't just remember," he said...

...

"You have a letter for me?" Anne asked, at mess time. Why in Heaven's name should just a letter make him blush so? She'd stayed too long... She must go home... Home,– what would that be,– Scared of that now... The Captain stood beside the hooks you hung your hat on. So, she knew... How did she know? Women,– Have to say something... Couldn't just stand here... The letter,– if he gave it to

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her, told her... She might go away and leave him... Or she might,– God... Could a German priest,– But she might go,–

"No, I haven't any letter for you," he said...

...

Evening. The canteen crowded. The old piano jangling. 'Smile-a-while, we'll,–' Anne, in the kitchen, stirred the cocoa. Ought to go home... No reason for staying in Germany any longer... Go down to Mühlhau tomorrow, next day... Easier to just stay... Crash. Something heavy bounced off the table of the canteen, rolled into the kitchen. It flopped to the floor. A helmet. 'Say, boy, have a heart!' Cleary was saying, 'Jest cos you git mad...' Pete strode in, stood, staring at Anne. So she was still here... Wouldn't a throwed his hat like that if he'd knowd. They'd lied, the God damned,– 'Where you been all this time, Pete?' she was sayin'...

"The guard-house. I done got drunk. Done told that God damn Sergeant what I thought about him. I fo't through this war, I don't care,–"

"Listen," Anne laid her hand on his sleeve. "Next time you want to tell someone what you think of them, come and tell me, will you?" His eyes fell to the hand on his arm. The damn arm trembling... Say, if she'd heard the things he said to that God damn son of a,– She wouldn't,– Her eyes, lookin' at yer... He flushed.

"No, Ma'am," he drawled. "I love you. I cain't say them kind o' things to you." He bent over and picked up his tin hat.

"Have some cocoa? Why,– where did he go to?" Anne said. Cleary was laughing...

...

The evening, growing late. Anne pushed the checker board away: "No use!" Cleary had beaten her the third game. The others, leaning on the table, watching... Candlelight touching their red, husky faces. Familiar faces... Kind faces... She'd grown to love them, these men...

"Tell me, did you ever kill anyone?" She looked at Cleary. A cloud that passed suddenly across the faces round the table... Smiles, fading... Hard to believe that these men,– 'Yes, Ma'am, six of 'em.' Cleary, looking at the others. In their eyes,– something,– a generation that would go through life, remembering,– "And you?" Corporal Crispie,– such a small, harmless person. He nodded, looking at the table, staring... 'Tell her how many you got, Krego.' The big man next him shifted. He tipped his chair back, pushing the table's edge with huge hands, his face dodging.

"Say, I couldn't a got started if it hadn't been fer Mike." Smiles from the others. 'Wan't he a funny guy, Mike?' 'Aw, that guy!' Grins... "Mike, he toppled over, and by God,–" the man stopped. He flushed,– crimson covering his high cheek bones, his eyelids dropping. He shook his head, slowly. Silence. Candlelight flickering

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on weather-beaten faces. On the genesta blossoms in a tall jar. Above the flowers, against the darkness, Pete's face. "Pete, he got more'n I did."

Pete's eyes, meeting Anne's,– a sort of terror in them... A look as if he were trying to escape from something... 'Got eleven of 'em, he did,' Cleary saying... 'Bravest man in the whole outfit, an' the craziest...'

"It made you feel badly," said Anne. Sorry she'd asked them... Hadn't meant to hurt that tall, strange creature... His eyes on hers, burning...

"No Ma'am," he said quietly. "Not when I killed 'em in a fair fight." He put his hand up and wiped the sweat with his cuff off his forehead. In the street, First Call, sounding. Chairs rattling against the board floor. Feet, shuffling toward the doorway. Cleary, helping Anne blow out the candles... He looked at her.

"War ain't so good," he said...

...

The street was dark and filled with the scent of flowers. A tall figure stepped out suddenly from a shadow, walked next to Anne. 'Pete?'

"There was one man I killed," he said. "I cain't forget him. I dream about him nights still." He walked on, silent, his long legs swinging slowly.

"Tell me."

"I got a piece o' shrapnel in my left arm. They sent me back to get a dressing on it. On my way back I seen a German lyin', with his whole insides a fallin' out of a big hole in his stomach. An' he was sufferin',– Christ!" His voice hissed in the darkness. He moistened his lips.

"Yes?"

"I picked him up, an' carried him,– as gentle as I could with one arm. Went more'n half a mile,– his blood a drippin', hot, down through my blouse in the back. An' then he screamed. He wanted fer me to lay him down, an' I did. His,– his guts was all a comin' out again an' him,– a knowin' everythin',– A sufferin',– God, how,–" Silence. Anne saw his eyes hunting for hers, in the dusk. They had both stopped.

"I took my gun and shot him," he said slowly. "I figured it was the kindest thing I could do." They turned and walked on.

"Yes," said Anne, "Yes." The house gate. The man stopping, looking at her. His eyes, burning.

"Was it? Should I have done that? Tell me! Do you think I should have done it? Sometimes I think I should, and sometimes I think,–" His eyes agonized, pleading through the darkness...

"You did what you thought was best," said Anne. "That's all we can do." He turned and walked off.

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"Yes, Ma'am," he was saying...

...

The Captain walked quickly. Perhaps he could walk home with her from the canteen... The evening had been,– a blank, like all the evenings... How could he get on without her any longer? First Call. Hurry,– Salute. Salute. The soldiers, going to their billets... The corner. Would she,–

He stopped. There was the Girl, walking with a soldier, slowly, her blue apron showing, grey, in the dark... The man tall, lanky,– a low voice,– Peterson... Hard drinker... A temper,– hard man to handle... Bravest soldier in the outfit when there was fighting so they all said,– he himself hadn't been with the outfit in the fighting... He watched the soldier and the Girl passing the street's end... The Girl, her face up, listening to what the man was saying... 'Tell me,' she said... Tell her what? Tell her how he loved her? The man had been drunk three days because someone had told him she wouldn't come back... Had got into a fight with the Sergeant, because the Sergeant had said,– Ought to demote that Sergeant,– The Captain rounded the corner, walked down the road behind them. See that the Girl was all right,– They oughtn't to send girls,– God, if they hadn't,– The man ahead talking to her, his voice gentle, pleading... There they were, stopping, looking at each other. God, if the man dared,– That dirty, rotten,– No, they went on, silent. Like to kill him... Try to get him transferred... Send him down to the delousing plant tomorrow... The soldier turning, walking away... 'Yes, Ma'am.'

The soldier saluted as he passed the Captain. God damn Captain, skulking round Her billet, wuz he? Like to break his damn neck...

The Captain, walking slowly, watched a grey figure shut a house door. Watched a pinkish, wavering light appear on the ceiling of a room above him. The window open... She,– he drew a long breath,– Then he turned, and walked off. The night patrol, their helmets tilted forward, bayonets pointing up across their shoulders, passed him. Salute. Salute. Somewhere above, into the night, Taps sounded...

...

The German train moved smoothly. Anne sat, with her head back against the cushions. Through the semi-darkness, the terraced vineyards of the Moselle River flashed past. It was over, over... All the agony and all the fun was over... That last, sudden romance, torn across like a piece of paper. The Great Adventure, finished... On the seat facing Anne, Evelyn Tollet sat with her feet up. She, too, was gazing at the passing vineyards. Anne closed her eyes. The street at Sonnenfeld... Its small, white houses and its blossoming fruit trees... The corner, with the Y. sign, and the saloon door... Days at first when most of them had gone into the saloon,– one or two to the canteen. Last night,– in the saloon a sergeant and a solitary soldier. The

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canteen crowded, crowded. Tonight, the place would be untidy, chilly. The flowers wilted. No cocoa. No lights lighted. They'd look in and ask where the Girl was? 'Hell' they'd say, and go into the saloon... Like to be back there... Lighting those candles... Hearing boots, shuffling through the doorway... Smiling, tanned, tough faces... Friendly voices...

The Captain... He would have read, by now, that note she'd left him. A prosaic note, explaining that she'd had a sudden chance to go down to the Victory Parade in Paris. Saying that she was sorry the company had been still at the range when the truck came for her. Thanking him for his kindness,– queer word to call it,– 'Kindness...'

Pete... His face, when she had asked him to come and take her bag down... 'You ain't a goin' ter leave us?' He'd dropped her bag, right in the street, stood, looking at her. 'Jesus Christ,' he'd muttered. 'Jesus Christ,' – every few steps he'd said it... Said it right out loud before the Y.M.C.A. truck man,– Well, the Y. man wouldn't have expected any better influence from a woman who'd smoked,–

"Still think you didn't do any good up there?" said Evelyn Tollet.

"I don't know," Anne said...

...

Morning. A flat wheel going ker-plunk, ker-plunk, giving you a little jolt with each sound: this was a French train. Shabby, grey cushions... 'Il est dangereux de se pencher en dehors.' Dangerous,– to lean out a window. Good God. Dangerous living, ended... The future: middle-aged people, guarding themselves in safety,– for what? 'Taisez-vous. Méfiez-vous. Les oreilles ennemies...' That tang of mystery... Gone, now... Those enemy ears, War... The world, safe. Safe. Most dangerous thing you could do, now, was to lean out the window. Anne yawned. The infinite boredom of Peace...

...

The flat wheel hammering slowly. Outside the windows, familiar freight yards, sliding. The Gare du Nord. Haunted by the passions of a generation... More than the streets themselves, more than the churches. Human beings parting from one another... Mothers, hunting for lost children... Births... Deaths... Here in the dark, between the piles of sandbags... The Gare du Nord would always bring back Youth and War and Danger... The girls stood up, hitched their uniforms, and pulled their hats on, getting the faded red triangles straight above their foreheads.

"So this is Paris," Anne said...

...

Paris,– a long breath,– this, after all, was home... Familiar streets, familiar jabbering. Crowds. No taxis. 'Beaucoup de monde aujourd'hui,' the blue-smocked porter grumbling. 'Demain le defilé...'[1] An Air Service truck jolted past, full of trunks, banging...

[1] 'A great crowd today. Tomorrow the parade.'

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"Hi, there!" Anne held her hand up. A soldier's face smiling,– Sure thing, he'd take 'em. The truck stopped and the soldier hauled their bags up. 'Atta boy, Frog,' to the porter... He pulled the girls up. The gears grated. The truck rumbled out among the moving people. 'Say, you used to be down to Avenoo Montaigne, didn'tcha?' the boy was saying... People. People, moving, talking, laughing. Paris. smiling. 'The whole town's out to-day,' the boy was saying...'Alors, mon choux!' a girl cried from the sidewalk, tossing a rose against the boy's nose. 'Say, Gosh,' he said, 'I guess we'll take a side street.'

The 'Place of the Little Stables,' narrow, hidden,– crowded with people, dancing on the pavement... Truck snorting in among them... Young men in civilian clothes and girls in short skirts, joining hands, whirling in a dizzy circle round the great truck, laughing. Stopping, breathless, giggling, throwing kisses. The big truck snorted onward.

"Yes, I remember you," the Air Service soldier talked on, "you were in Colonel Henderquist's office, upstairs. The Colonel, he's gone home. Took that there Miss,– Miss,– his secretary with him."

"Oh, did he?" Anne said...

...

Madame de Mourgues'. Familiar, clipped, green hedge beside the sidewalk. You knew the bitter taste of those leaves... The concierge in his black smock. 'Mademoiselle est de retour,' the concierge, smiling. Two lives before the last, you used to live here... So it might be to get to Downham, only more strange... Randolph, coming out the door, swanky, in spurs,– yet with a limp,– a cane to lean on,– "Anne!" he hopped forward, shook her hand, kissed it, took her bag from her. "God, but it's nice to see you!"

"Rosalind here?" The smell of floor-wax met her. A scrupulous, shining cleanness. The little room, empty, waiting. A new maid, bowing, smiling: sure that Madame would be pleased to receive Mademoiselle...

"Rosalind sailed yesterday. I'm waiting for my damned orders. The doctor thought she'd better go,– didn't she write you? She's going to have a child." He set Anne's bag down. Anne stood, looking at the bag. No reason Rosalind shouldn't have a baby. People did that, in Peace times... Spent their time marrying and having children ... Children to grow up and go to wars and get killed... But that old world of children had slipped so far, far... So dreamlike, so unreal now...

"Why that's fine," she said...

...

The new maid came in and pulled the curtains. If Mademoiselle wanted a bain chaud, one could it make warm now. One paid very dear,– four francs,– but, enfin,– Mademoiselle did want one? Eh, bien!

"Where is Clémentine?" Anne asked. Strange not to see Clémen-

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tine's pale face, her tragic, brown eyes... Eyes that had grown less and less tragic as the one-armed soldier had met her more and more often at the kiosk...

"A-a-ah! Clémentine a eu un grand malheur, Mademoiselle! Pire que tout!"[1] The new maid shook her smooth head. Mademoiselle would recall that the husband of Clémentine had been killed,–

"But that was long ago," said Anne. "She married a poilu, with one arm,–"

"Oui, Mademoiselle, c'est ce qui est si tragique! Her first man has come back..."

"Awkward," said Anne.

...

A hot bath. Delicious, rare thing... Peace... To lie there, feel your skin softening, feel your whole self relaxing... The bath salts that Rosalind had left behind her smelled of heliotrope... One had had,– one, two... Seven hot baths in two years. Now, almost upon you, a lifetime of hot baths. A world, safe for hot baths...

...

Anne walked beside Randolph, down the Champs-Elysées. There were men in civilian clothes,– how strange... Crowds of people talking, laughing. Flags waving gently. 'Tomorrow,' people said, 'tomorrow...' A new life creeping in here... Henri's. A pink plush sofa, back to a wall covered with mirrors. Randolph discussing dishes with the waiter... A stout old Frenchman across the way there, with a lovely lady,– too bad the lady sat with her back to you... She must be pretty, the eyes of the old Frenchman,– and of the American General and his aide at the next table, showed that... Young man of the Peace Conference and a girl... Italian Colonel and a French woman... Hors-d'œuvres before you, and a bottle of champagne. Randolph saying 'Now tell me all about it...'

"But I must hear first about you," Anne said...

...

"So you think you'll go and live at Downham till the child comes?" Couldn't see Randolph, somehow, with Aunt Anna...

"Just for a while. You see, I want to paint, Anne. I've got my sketches,– hundreds of 'em. And I can feel the beauty of the air still. There's a color that you get between the clouds when you come down,– And that feeling of bursting out of a cloud into the sun, and the thrill of going on with Archies all about you..."

"Yes?" With bread Anne cleaned up the lobster thermidor's sauce. The woman at the table opposite pushed her chair back, picked up her white gloves. The General, turning half round, to stare better... A faint perfume,– lilies... Day, long ago in July... Light, coming upward through closed shutters... Touching hair, the color of pale straw... Turning its smoothness greenish... A woman, tall, blue and

[1] 'Clementine has had a great sorrow, Mademoiselle! The worst of all!'

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gold, before a mantel, looking through a fringe of long eyelashes... The same eyes, looking down now. Amélie Delsart. Glancing away from Randolph, moving quickly... Her dress of flowered chiffon whisked against the table. The eyes, mere slits among the long, thick lashes... Red lips, a hard line. The scent of lilies, fading. Her back. The old Frenchman, red-faced, whiskered, senatorial, doddering behind her. Cutting off the moving, sinuous shoulders... 'Don't you think so?' Randolph, saying...

"Yes,– sure..." A waiter, holding up a cape of satin, lined with scarlet. Scarlet, flashing like the wing of some bright blackbird, through the doorway. Disappearing into the summer evening... Old Frenchman nodding to the doorman...

"What are you looking at?" said Randolph. Why should Anne be reminding him of,–

"Oh, nothing," Anne said...

...

Crowds, wandering in the Boulevard des Italiens. The Boulevard, filled with dim light from many opened windows. The murmur of conversation and of laughter. A girl grabbed suddenly at Randolph's overseas cap. Randolph, snatching it off, making the girl a low bow... 'A votre service, Madame!' The girl running away, with a shrill scream of laughter... 'Here, take my arm, Anne. Protect me!' Randolph, stuffing his cap into his pocket.

"Paris has gone clean crazy, hasn't it?" Anne said.

"Yes. Like you laugh when you're first comin' out of ether..." They wandered, slowly. Young girls and men, holding each other's hands, running among the walkers. Dancing a circle round two American officers, laughing, singing... The American officers standing there, bewildered... Girls, snatching their caps off, disappearing. Anne stood still. Something,– about that back,– those shoulders,– The Captain. Heavens... Here? In Paris? Why, she thought she'd never see him again... Queer feeling in her stomach... It was the way *he* felt that made you feel queer... Get away... Gosh... She took Randolph's arm, turned him round, walked swiftly in the opposite direction. 'What's the matter?'

"Come, let's go somewhere and have a Cointreau," Anne said...

...

The night before, it had been, that the Captain walked through the train shed at Coblenz. Four hours ago the Girl had been here... Turner, carrying his bags, was talking glibly to the German trainmen. 'Say, here's a place, Cap'n. Looks like a lotta these folks'll have to stand up. Yes, Sir! Good-bye, Sir!'

Turner swung himself off, walked back to the station. Beat Hell the way these orficers could get leave... Bet anythin' he's goin' to find Miss Wentworth... Marry her, p'raps... Or anyways, go with her... Hell, a God damn soldier that fought in the trenches 'n killed

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five Germans, couldn't git no leave to go off chasin' women... Hadda go back to that God damn town up in the mountains... Everyone'd be drunk up there by this time. Richardson couldn't hold 'em,– him, runnin' with the Fräuleins. No more excitement waitin' on the mess now,– the Cap'n an' the Girl, both gone... Like watchin' a show, that. A dumb poor show, too,– no pep to it. Christ, never thought the Cap'n ud have the pep to run off after her like that... Might not get the same train at Metz, but anyways, he'd get the next one,– catch the Girl in Paris...

A soldier from the Forty-Second Division walked past. Say, how'd it be to get in a God damn guard-house somewheres? Better'n goin' back up to them mountains... Anyways, you'd see how yer arms an' legs worked... Give somebody a black eye... Turner undid his blouse. "What's the brightest color in the Rainbow?" he shouted. "Yello-o-ow!"

The soldier turned round...

...

The Captain sat back in his seat. He pushed his legs out, pulled them in again. Crowded, horrid things these foreign trains were... Have to sit here all night. Back in God's country you'd have decent Pullmans... The Girl must have travelled like this, squashed into a foreign train with all these men... No business sending innocent young girls out like that, in foreign countries, to stay with armies... Yet, if she hadn't come,– Got to see her... Bring her back here... Protect her... Do things for her... Put your arms,– A red-faced major looking in the door of the compartment. Same Medical Major who'd taken care of you in the hospital up yonder when you'd had flu last winter... Behind him a nurse in a blue cape with a scarlet lining.

"How de do, Captain?" said the Major. "I'm looking for a place for Miss Smith, here. Guess there's no places in here." He retreated to the corridor as the train moved. "I guess, Miss Smith," his voice loud, "we'll have to stand all night." The Captain got up, went to the corridor, touched the nurse's shoulder. Why should the woman's shoulder remind him of,– The nurse turned a sallow, hard face, with powder on it, lips that were painted... Cold, black eyes that pierced you, understood you... A woman who, who,–

"Won't you take my seat, Ma'am?" said the Captain...

...

The Captain lay on the floor of the corridor, his head on a musette bag. The top of the Major's head, touching the top of his... The Major snorting, pushing... The Captain's head, bumping to the floor, his hip pressing... Shoulders too high, too lumpy. The street at Sonnenfeld, down where the Girl lived... Go kill Richardson and get him out of there... The Girl on the steps, putting her hand down on his shoulder... Pressing,– God,– Somebody walking down the corridor grabbing his shoulder to keep from falling... Stepping on his

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hand... Kicking the Major,– the Major snorted, raised his head up. 'God damn!' he said...

...

Morning. The train, near Metz. The Captain stood in the corridor, stretching his legs, trying to get the stiffness out of the joints. Next him the Major, horrible with beard and great bags under his eyes. Miss Smith came out and joined them. She'd had a comfortable night, she said. Powdering her sallow face. Touching her lips with something red out of a bag. The Captain, looking away. Made you feel sick, that... Sick or hungry,– hungry... 'You look tired, Captain. How kind it was of you to give me your place!' Damn the woman...

...

The Captain stood before the Gare du Nord, looking out into the Place de Roubaix. Grey buildings, lighted windows, taxis, people dodging... So this was Paris... Never did like big towns... Where was the Girl? How would he find Her in a big town like this? No place for a simple girl like her to be turned loose in... Girl in a blue apron... Girl in a grey suit walking beside him through a forest... What would the Girl do in this great, noisy town here? Where had she gone to? A card in his hand that someone had shoved at him in the Assistant Provost Marshal's office. Greetings, probably, from the Rotary or from the,– 'Venereal disease is prevalent among the public women who will accost you... If patriotism, morality and personal hygiene do not prevent you from associating with such women, prophylactic stations are open at...' Bah! That pursued you... Man, jabbering here next him in a blue smock, carrying his bags... 'Here, gimme the bag. Combieng?' Damn the Frogs... Well, there was the hotel, anyway, across the street there,– perhaps the Girl would be there... He carried his bag to the Hôtel Terminus du Nord.

The hallway smelled of carpets. Room smelled of carpets. Greyish lace curtains hanging before the window. The Captain held aside a curtain. A subway entrance, people hurrying up and down. A barroom,– people sitting at little tables on the sidewalk... Fool way to let folks clutter up the sidewalks... The smutty front of the North Station. Hell, why was it everybody wanted to get to Paris?

...

So this was Main Street,– the M.P. must know... Big, broad street, with hundreds of folks walking in it... Why, not a single automobile was parked here! A French girl, saying something to you... 'No compris.' Another girl, throwing colored bits of paper in your face and running. Nuts, these Frogs... American soldiers,– if only you weren't a captain, you could talk to 'em... Soldiers taking the French girls by the arm and talking to 'em. American lieutenant, seemed to be alone there... The Captain edged up near him. 'D'ju ever see anything to beat these girls?' said the Lieutenant.

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The Captain walked beside the Lieutenant, silent. Crowds, but no one you knew. Up at Sonnenfeld the night guard would be going on post now... Two soldiers, bayonets fixed, tin hats on, walking, quiet, down the street together... Your men,– that was home, that... What were these French girls doing? Dancing round him and this strange lieutenant, grabbing his hat off, singing... Say, what was this, anyway? There, thank God, they'd run off... Might have given him his hat back,–

"Say, I'd like to take the next train back to Coblenz!" said the Captain. Couldn't... Got to find the Girl... Get her away from this place... Take her back home... Protect her...

"Say, it's a great War!" said the Lieutenant, laughing...

...

Morning. The Captain went down to his breakfast. What? All over? Chairs piled upside down on all the tables. A waiter in a white apron, sweeping. The waiter never heard of 'breakfast.' Jabbering... Damn these Frogs... He walked across the street. Post cards in a shop. Better buy a post card and mail it to the Girl, let her know where you were stopping... Here was one, with a heart-shaped wreath made out of roses,– women liked those things... Milly,– God... 'c/o The American Y.M.C.A.' he addressed it. Gave it to the man behind the desk at the hotel. There now, she might run in and have lunch, same as she used to... The man at the desk showing it to the waiter, damn him. Laughing...

Breakfast. The very air of this town made you hungry... Breakfast done, two hours ago, in Sonnenfeld, oatmeal, bacon... 'Da-zsher-nay' said the Phrase Book. 'Da-zsher-nay? Compris?' It wouldn't be ready until twelve, the Frogs said. No wonder we had to come over and win the damn war... Walk down to Main Street,– only place he knew the way to... Might find a Quick Lunch...

People sitting on the sidewalk, drinking,– before breakfast... The Medical Major from the Hospital at Coblenz, sitting outside a place called 'Café de Paris.' 'Good morning, Major!' Good to see someone you knew... Yes, he'd sit down... No, he didn't want wine,– not before breakfast. If he could get some coffee,– 'Kuffay! Kuffay!' The Major was cheerful. On his way back to the U.S. he said. Damnably cheerful... The Captain,– it was black coffee, filled with some damn thing,– he made a wry face. Didn't like sitting on the sidewalk, either... Everyone brushing past you... Girls, looking at you... A girl,– 'Good morning!' she said. Why, this was Miss Smith,– dressed like a civilian. The Captain rose and pulled a chair out for her. She was almost pretty in that little hat,– pulled so far down she had to hold her head back to look out... While she talked her eyes kept roving up and down among the crowds that wandered... As though she were hunting,–

"Well!" The Major smacked his lips and set his glass down.

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"Guess I better be jumping for my train!" He tipped his chair over as he got up. His face red. The nurse held her hand up. 'Adieu, mon ami!' The Captain watched her. Her lips hardening into a straight, thin line... The Major hesitated, stammered something. Then he turned and hailed a passing taxi. For him, that ended Paris...

Miss Smith leaned across the table to the Captain: "You like Paris, Captain? What? You have seen nothing? Ah, let us go to Versailles..."

...

The Captain and Miss Smith wandered out on Louis XIV's terrace, walking slowly. The Captain steadied Miss Smith's elbow with his fingers. Felt good, somehow, to feel a woman next you. Her elbow pressed your hand, like Milly's used to... He hadn't liked this palace she had shown him,– it looked like his room at the Hôtel Terminus du Nord,– empty, ornate. He liked homes cheerful. Girls in blue aprons, kitchens... Here were stone steps, down to an oblong fish-pond. Miss Smith caught her heel, tripping. Grab her... Catch her... Arm round her waist,– God, the soft give of a woman's body... Not this woman's body that you wanted,– Hard face, red lips, held open, laughing... He stood the woman up, stooped down to brush her. 'I hope you're not hurt...'

"Au contraire," said Miss Smith. Why did she talk French?

...

A jolting little train went back to Paris. It would be fun to sit on the roof, Miss Smith thought. The Captain held his head down to keep out the cinders. A tunnel. Miss Smith frightened, clinging to him... His muscles taut, like iron. Wonder if the Girl would cling to you like this woman if she got frightened... Never got frightened, the Girl... 'Well, Captain, shall we go and eat our dinner on the Eiffel Tower?' Miss Smith, saying...

...

They walked slowly through the Champ de Mars. The Captain smiled. That had been the first good meal he'd had in Paris... Miss Smith here, spoke French like any native... Made the Frogs bring potatoes with the meat course... Miss Smith's mother, she said, had been Parisian, she had an aunt living here in Paris... 'You'll come home with me, won't you, Captain?' she was saying... Home, and meet her folks... Well, why not?

"I don't mind if I do," said the Captain...

...

The rue Letellier was a narrow, dark street. Before the door of Number 26 there sat a woman in a black dress, knitting. Miss Smith turned in,– the woman must be her aunt,– No,– 'Bonsoir, Madame,' Miss Smith said. The woman looked up. Said nothing. Turned her head way round to watch the Captain...

Up three narrow flights of stairs the Captain followed Miss Smith.

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Queer not to find the aunt on the first floor, in the kitchen, perhaps, or in the parlor... The girl fitted a key into a keyhole. 'Denise Cherrier' written on a paper, pinned to the door... 'Your aunt?' asked the Captain. Queer, this... 'Oh, no. My aunt does not live here.' Miss Smith opened the door.

A small room, filled with women's clothing... The Red Cross Nurse's uniform flung across the table... Its scarlet cape blazed out as the girl struck a match, held it to an oil lamp that hung above the table. She drew a box from under the wide bed in the corner. From it she took a bottle and two glasses. Pushing aside some corsets and a chemise, she set the wine down. 'There!' She emptied a chair for him to sit on, took her hat off, powdered her nose before a small, dingy mirror. On her lips used that small, red thing. He stood, watching. This was a trick, then...

"Ah, Captain, you are tired," she poured out two glasses of the red stuff, "this will make you better..."

"No thanks." There was the uniform... The woman might catch others... "I'll smoke, if you don't mind." He lit a cigar. Then he turned, suddenly, and faced her. "You're not a nurse!" he said. The woman hopped up on the wide bed. She took his hand and stroked it, laughing at him with the red lips. The Captain frowned. Why didn't he pull his damned hand,– Why did he,– He'd just stay long enough to get this straightened out... Damn the woman... He jerked his hand free.

"Ecoutez, mon Capitaine," she said. "A nurse, only to please the Major, to make him happy. It was he who furnished me my uniform, took me to Coblence. To go, it was necessary to be a nurse. Mais quoi! C'est fini! He is gone." She pulled at a shabby pillow, propped her head against it. The man, toying with her uniform at the table... "Mon ami," she said slowly, "vous avez le cafard. Et moi, aussi, j'ai le cafard. It is not right. At Paris one loves, one amuses oneself. The Major was very happy while he stayed in Paris."

The girl sat up, leaned toward him. Her red lips... God... She stiffened, suddenly, sniffing like a wild thing. Her eyes fixed on a curl of smoke that rose from the table. The room filled with the acrid smell of burning woolen... "Tiens!" she hissed, springing toward the table. "You have then put your cigar down on my uniform! Name of a dog! We shall all take fire!" She darted toward it. His hand, on her shoulder, pushing her backward. Strange pleasure, sometimes it was, to hurt a woman...

"Let it go a little," he said. "I'll put it out when the time comes."

"Ah! Toi, animal! Sale bête d'Américain!" She ran her fingers through her black hair, rushed to the door and locked it, turned on him, crouching. "S'il faut brûler, mon vieux, tu vas brûler avec moi, je te le garantis." [1] The Captain picked up a basin of dirty water from

[1] 'If it is a question of burning, thou wilt burn with me, I promise you that.'

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the washstand. Whatever the woman said, that uniform was done for... He poured the water on it.

"Ah! Chameau! Tu m'as gâché mon uniforme![1] Ha! Thou shalt pay!" She pulled the key from the door, stuck it inside the neck of her dress. "Before I open that door, you will pay me, or I will call the agent of police. I will scream, till one comes to my help." She rushed toward the window.

"Stop!" The woman stopped. A-a-ah! So she was looking into the barrel of a revolver! Surely this man would not dare to kill her? Still, better do what he said... Better unlock,– Key, fallen down inside the chemise... Undo the blouse... Let him see,– men were human...

The Captain stood over her while she fumbled with the keyhole. His knees trembling. White breast... White breast... Thin folds of dress, clinging about the woman's body... Before she'd found that key, he'd seen,– God! Panting... Wanting to grab this woman, squeeze her, carry her limp and struggling to the great bed in the corner,– Would, if she didn't hurry,– God... White hands, trembling... She drew the door toward her, slowly. Suddenly she turned, her face toward him. Black eyes, laughing... Red lips, partly open,– too close,– God...

"Tu m'as!" The woman threw her head back. "You have me, this time, but tomorrow! Ah! Tomorrow, you will come back!" She held the door wide. He bolted past her. Damn those red lips... Damn his own arms... Twitching... Find the stairway... Stumble down it, shaking... Quivering... Out of here... 'Au revoir, my friend,' he heard her voice come from the top step, 'and till tomorrow... Till tomorrow...'

...

"They made me cry. They always do," Anne said.

"Who did?" asked Randolph. They sat at a table in the garden of the Restaurant des Ambassadeurs. Along the Champs-Elysées holiday crowds still wandered. It was the fourteenth of July, 1919.

"The Americans in the parade did." Anne leaned forward, resting her elbows on the table. "I don't believe in nationalism," she said, "it causes war, and anything that causes war's bad. But when you see our troops, or the flag in a strange place, they remind you suddenly of home and,– people who have died, and,– all of a sudden you get all choked up. It's not logical. It's,– it's something more. It was like that today."

"They *were* a damn good bunch," said Randolph. "Never saw troops anywhere to touch 'em,– those lines,– Perfect soldiers, those were."

"Last year they marched with open ranks," said Anne, "and mud from the front still on them. They looked like tremendously serious young boys. Today they were hard-boiled. Did you see the way they never batted an eye to right or left, with all those thousands yelling

[1] 'Ah! Camel! Thou hast ruined my uniform for me.'

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their heads off at them? Sometimes I think we're getting militaristic ourselves,–"

"Don't worry." Randolph handed Anne a cigarette and snapped his briquet. "Those birds looked to me like they were sayin': 'We've learned to play your game as well as you do, and we don't give a damn for it.' They looked as if the whole of Europe could go to Hell for all that they cared."

"I'm a little afraid," said Anne, "the men are going home with the idea that they can lick this whole outfit over here if ever they happen to want to. I'm afraid they may throw a chest,– try to glorify militarism,–"

"Did you see that little bunch of blessés that straggled past before the show began this morning?" Randolph shifted in his chair. His damned leg cramping... The old pain, thrilling through it... "Blind men, being led along by children... Men with no legs, being pushed in baby carriages by their wives... Men with two empty coat sleeves... Those fellers ought to have been the head of the procession. This parade ought to have been the halt and the blind, straggling through the wreck of Rheims Cathedral..."

"Yes, but nobody would have liked that," Anne said...

...

The Place de la Concorde, lit by drooping chains of red lights... Alive with people, wandering and talking... Randolph reached ahead and poked a tall civilian in the shoulders. 'Hey, there, son!' Hugh MacDonald turned round. "Pendleton! Why Anne! You back? Come on up on the roof of the Crillon,– it's nice up there..." The foyer of the old hotel guarded by soldiers... 'You sure did a bum job when you shut the populace out of this bar...' Randolph saying, limping... Stairs, 'God damn...' Out through a little room,– Hugh's bed all yellow satin... The roof. Below, a haze of purple summer darkness alive with voices. People moving, talking... From here once you might have watched women waiting round a guillotine and knitting... Laughing because the world was safe from tyrants... Tonight they laughed because,– 'For God's sake Pendleton, don't sit on that rail!' Hugh, worried...

"I've fallen further than that," said Randolph calmly. "Tell us, Hugh, what became of the Fourteen Points when you and Woodrow Wilson made the treaty?"

Hugh, serious: "Well, the President did his best. Hard to convince men like Clémenceau and Lloyd George that we were really fighting to establish a new order of things,–"

"Well, were we?" said Randolph. "When I was with the French we fought for France, and for the love of a good scrap."

"Of course we were!" said Anne. "We came over here so that there couldn't be any more War,–"

"Yes, that was what Wilson told us," said Hugh. "Some of us

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really believed it. I did. But I'm beginning to wonder now whether our people didn't go into it just the way they did over here, because they thought that in the end Germany'd come over and lick them. I believe that even Wilson saw that war was coming anyway, and so he thought he might as well put it on the highest plane he could. So he talked about Justice between nations, and idealists like you and me, Anne, believed what he said,–"

"If I hadn't I wouldn't have come," said Anne.

"I think there's a good chance they may not sign the treaty at home," said Hugh. "Lodge and his bunch are sore because they weren't brought over,–"

"But Hugh," said Anne. "We've *got* to sign it. We made the Allies sign it. It was our idea. Why, going back on them would be just like quitting on the front. It's fantastic! If we don't sign, the whole two years will have been nothing but one grand farce,–" She stopped. This couldn't be... All those lives... Geoffrey...

"There's no use kidding ourselves, Anne," said Hugh. "They may not ratify the treaty in the U.S."

"If I thought that," said Anne, "I'd never go back."

...

The Y.M.C.A. Headquarters in the rue d'Aguesseau. 'OUR LAST WORK FOR THE BOYS MUST BE OUR BEST.' Anne ran past the big sign. Rows of Y. men sitting in stuffed armchairs reading papers. Rows of women, standing. 'You wait two months to get your passage, and then they stick you in a Concentration Camp at Brest for three weeks...' Girls, talking. Anne hurried past them,– you couldn't do that,– three weeks with Y.M.C.A. men... Better jump in the river... A line of fifty outside the Post Office,– let the mail go... 'A FRIENDLY PLACE FOR FRIENDLY PEOPLE.' Damn the friendly people... She waited on a bench outside the office of the Director of Women. Stenographers rushing this way, that way, in uniforms made in the U.S. that didn't fit, that had no swank about them... It took Europe to add swank to militarism,– they had been at it for a thousand years now... This creature with the gold hair saying you'd have to wait an hour,– after waiting two years... 'No, it will be worse tomorrow. Sorry.' After an hour she asked Anne to step in. 'Can't get you a passage for at least three weeks, Miss Wentworth,' the Directress, smiling...

"Good Lord!" Anne said...

...

"There is an American who awaits Mademoiselle," Madame de Mourgues' new maid met Anne in the hallway. "It is two hours," she said, "that he has waited.." The Captain. She knew it. Wouldn't go in there... Wouldn't... Like to turn and run from this Thing... It had been another world that he had lived in... He didn't belong in this one... Yet,– she'd have to see him. He was the sort of man who'd

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wait forever... She went to her room and took her things off slowly. Put her civilian clothes on... Black dress,– made you look tall and slender... Broad cuffs and collar of smooth, white satin... White gloves... The new white felt hat you'd bought this morning... Feet in silk stockings, and high-heeled shoes with buckles... She leaned toward the mirror, touching her face with powder, pinning her hairnet. He'd better see you this way...

She tapped at Randolph's door as she went past it. Randolph packing,– his transport sailed tomorrow. Chaperon her this afternoon to the Louvre? What was the matter? Why? Anne, looking almost pretty... Her eyes, getting soft and beautiful like her mother's... What the Hell did she want *him* to come for? 'But you've been up there alone with these birds all this time, Anne...'

"That's it," she said, "I'd rather not be now, please..."

...

The Captain stood by the window in the petit salon. Old ladies came in, in high-necked, black dresses. 'Bonjour, Madame,' they nodded to one another, across feeble handshakes. Old ladies, talking, nodding... A plump, young Frenchman came in, with curled mustachios, yellow spats. Kissed one of the old ladies on the forehead: 'Maman!' Bent over, kissed the other old women's hands with a great flourish... Turned from them, suddenly, to greet a slim, pretty woman, who came in. A white hat that almost hid her face, a dark suit, slim, grey ankles... 'Ah, Mademoiselle!' He held the woman's hand a moment longer than he needed... 'Comme Mademoiselle est jolie en civil!'

The woman turned suddenly toward the Captain,– was coming forward with her hand out. Someone who must have thought she knew,– He didn't know this woman,– Yet,– his damn knees trembling... This couldn't be the Girl, of the blue apron... His Girl had been a simple, boylike creature... A person of neat, white collars, sweaters, short skirts. Yet these were Her grey eyes, shining... Why did Her face look different, thinner, older? Why couldn't he speak? Why could he only stand there, putting his two hands underneath Her elbows, trembling, trembling? Why must he quiver so and let Her see,– right off,– at the beginning?... Her voice,– cool, humorous her voice was,– always... 'How do you do?' she said. 'Will you lunch with us? Or shall we go out somewhere? Oh, Randolph!' she turned, speaking across her shoulder to a tall, aviation fellow dodging past behind them, limping. 'We'll meet you here,' she said, 'at two...'

...

Anne walked, eyes front, along the sidewalk, talking. 'I promised my cousin I'd go to the Louvre,– this is his last day.' The Captain strode, silent, beside her, gazing at her. Could it be the Girl? This tall, slim lady, smoothing the white gloves down over her fingers. The brown hair, that used to toss in shining wisps in the wind, disappeared

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now, in neat waves, under the hat brim. Feet, in grey silk stockings, shoes with shiny buckles, treading so confidently across the pavement... The white glove touched his arm, to keep him from being run over by a taxi. And he had been going to take her in his arms, protect her... Carry her back with him, up to their small town in the green hills... His Girl, who would be unhappy, lonely in this great place... And here was this person, cool, confident, well dressed... No place for him, here... 'How did you leave the boys,' she asked. And 'did they miss me?'

...

"Here's a good place." Anne turned in at an Italian restaurant on the Avenue Matignon. This wouldn't cost him too much...

"All right," he said. Find a table in the corner somewheres, where he could tell her,–

"Let's sit outside," she said, "here on the sidewalk." The sidewalk safer... She pulled her gloves off slowly. "You like Paris, Captain?" One must keep talking,– he was getting,– looking,–

"No." He looked at her. God, you couldn't tell her this way, on a sidewalk... And yet he'd have to,– He smiled...

"Ah, I love Paris," she said. "Paris is like a beautiful woman who weeps, and then smiles,–" Thank God, the waiter...

The Captain's smile evaporated. There was a streak of hardness in this girl here... Sitting looking at the bill of fare through gold-edged glasses that she snapped open, held up... Asking him if he wouldn't like beefsteak, potato, string beans? Smiling. Talking to the waiter in swift French,– how did she know French? Asking if he'd mind if she had something different... 'Arty Show,' what was that? He wouldn't mind anything if she'd go put on her apron, be Herself again... His Girl... 'Tell me what you've been doing since you've been in Paris, Captain?' He blushed. Couldn't tell her that,– "I went to Versailles yesterday."

"And did you like it?" Anything to keep the conversation going...

"No,– except the little place where somebody used to go and play cow." He paused. "This isn't any place for you to stay," he said, suddenly, gazing at her, earnest. "You don't know what a rotten place this town is." Anne laughed. The food, at last, thank God...

"So on the whole," she said, "you don't like Paris..."

...

The long alley of the Tuileries Garden, filled with sunshine. Anne strolled along it, the Captain on one side, Randolph on the other. Watching children playing among the shadows on the yellow gravel. Curly heads catching the sunshine... Shrill, sweet voices, rolling great R's... At the path's end, a garden, larkspur, marigolds, dahlias,– splotches of blue and gold and crimson reflected in a placid, round pool. Anne, in the middle. Beauty... Beauty... A storm on one side and an artist on the other... Feeling you looked well... Feeling, some-

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how, you were a part of Paris... You'd lived with her through the dark nights... The Captain, silent, striding. Who in Hell was this man she called her cousin,– stopping, holding his head on one side, his eyes half closed, stopping to talk to children in the town square... Strolling toward some place they called the 'Loove.' Must be some movie house or something,– it was just opened since the war they told him... The Girl, walking... Part of her dress that flew out, flapped against his gaiter... God... Stopping, standing next the Girl, waiting for this aviator fellow to catch up... Damn him... The Girl, smiling at the fellow... 'Oh, Anne, I hate to leave it,' he was saying...

...

The Louvre. They walked into the Galerie Denon. 'We must see the pastels de Latour,' said Randolph, 'they're in here somewhere.' 'Let's see the Greeks first.' Anne stopped before a marble Hermes. His back... His muscles... Bones inside them... Smooth thighs... She walked round it, slowly. Lovely... Lovely... 'Fifth Century,' said Randolph. 'By Jove! Isn't it a wonder?' The Captain stood, looking at the floor below it, blushing. What kind of a girl was it that took you to see statues of naked young men... That walked around them looking,–

"Ah, Anne, see! I'd forgotten this one." Randolph stopped before the broken torso of a young girl, stooping over, the thinnest drapery, that melted to the outline of her body. "God,– if you could do things like that!"

The Captain looked away from it, out the window. A cheap silk dress, clinging about a woman's body... Had not wanted to think again about that woman... This aviator fellow standing pointing to the curves about the girl's breast, her stomach... Talking to Miss Wentworth about 'Form...' She, looking at it calmly, with not the slightest blush, and saying 'Yes, yes...' God...

Anne looked up. Heavens, the man was blushing... Embarrassed at Greek marbles... Why, hadn't he seen them? Didn't he,– know,– "You must see the Venus of Milo," she said. 'See who?' The Captain followed. Thank God, she was moving out of this place... All these old broken statues... But enough left in the pieces to make you,–

"A statue of a friend of Anne's," laughed Randolph. His spurred heels stepped ahead, stopped. "I swear, she *is* lovely! A bit Hellenistic, but still,–" He stood, looking down the long corridor toward the statue. Venus, placid, snowy white, against the high black curtains. "If it hadn't been for you fellows, Captain, she'd be in Berlin by this time."

"She might be there now, for all of me." The Captain, blushing...

Up a broad stairway. The Captain, watching the Girl's slim ankles under their grey silk. New shoes,– they stopped on the landing. The Girl was gazing upward, her eyes full of,– full of,– the way they used to look when she was in the sun with the wind blowing...

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Why, they were looking at some old, broken statue with its head off. Queer place to put a broken statue, where it showed so... 'You can feel the wind, brushing her skin,–' the aviator fellow... The Girl, looking at the Captain, searching his face... She turned, suddenly toward the aviator fellow. 'Come on,' she said...

...

The pastels of Latour, faces smiling, faintly, like people through a dim mist. 'I want to go through this room again, Anne. Hanged if I don't. You people go ahead!' Randolph limped off. Leave 'em alone a minute... Rotten of Anne to keep this poor bird gazing...

A high table stood in the middle of the gallery. Anne leaned her elbows on it. 'All right. We'll wait.' The Captain leaned his elbows next hers. To be near Her... Near Her... He hadn't told Her... Made him tremble, just to think,– If he should touch Her, she'd know... Her arm, next his... Her breath... Chin on Her hands, eyes gazing at these damnable smiling faces... God, he must tell Her... Why, he'd,– O, God... Anne stood, watching Randolph. Why didn't he come? They'd go to tea somewhere, and then it would be over... Something she had successfully avoided,– The table, under her elbows, trembling, quivering. Heavens, that great, oak table... The Thing she had avoided, coming to her suddenly, through the table. The Thing was somehow stronger than the Man was... About them, the Pastels of Latour smiling faintly... Randolph turned, and came toward them. Standing there like dumb-bells, were they, silent? "Ready to go?" he said.

"You bet," said Anne.

...

Rumpelmeyer's at tea time. Glass counter, loaded with gay pastries. At tables people sitting, talking, laughing. Waiters, coming, going, carrying broad trays. Randolph sat down. Careful of his damned leg,– Pain... 'God damn...' Over... He rubbed his hands. His last tea in Paris... Paris... Anne sat down next him, smiling. Better smile, or you might cry... What would they all have? The Captain, opposite, uncomfortable and silent. He'd prefer coffee,– never cared for tea. Why did this girl suddenly want tea? She'd never had it up home,–

"The nicest meal of all the day, at home, tea," said Anne. The Captain sat back, looked at her. So she belonged to folks who drank tea, did she? He watched her drawing off her white gloves, laying them on the smooth, white cloth beside her. She seemed at home in this place... The aviator fellow holding a gold cigarette case toward him, 'no thanks, he didn't use 'em,'– in his church you,– Why, the fellow was holding the gold case toward the Girl, damn him! She didn't see it,– of course,– she wouldn't take one... Wasn't *that* kind... The fellow touching her elbow with it,– Good God! The Girl,– his Girl,– taking one absently, as she looked round her...

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Banging it against the back of her hand the way a man would... Lighting it from the aviator's briquet. Must have lit hundreds of cigarettes before this... Smoke, coming from her nostrils... And he hadn't allowed the officers to smoke at mess when she was with them... So, after all, she *was* that kind of woman... And yet,– God! Your whole soul, whole body aching to, to,–

"I say, Captain," Randolph tipped his chair back, blowing smoke above the woman's white hat,– Damndest gloomy party he'd ever been on... "What do you think of this idea of sending Y.M.C.A. girls with the army? Does it work?" The Captain's eyes travelled from Randolph's to the Woman next him. Her grey eyes met his, half amused, half eager. He flushed. If she was bad, she wasn't ashamed,–

"No," he said, "it doesn't."

...

The rue de Rivoli. They stepped out, under the arcade, among the people. The street, its passing cabs, its noisy motors... Beyond the fence, the Tuileries Garden lying placid, sun slanting, yellow, on the green grass... "We'll take a cab," Anne said to Randolph, "to save your leg." The Captain, standing next her, silent. 'Damn my leg,–' Randolph stopped. Anne glaring... Better get a carriage... He limped off. "Shall I see you again?" She turned toward the Captain, smoothing on her white gloves. In a few more minutes, she'd be weeping... Couldn't stand this... If Randolph would only hurry...

The Captain looked down at her. So it had failed... If only she'd looked different... Had had on that shabby, grey-green uniform, with its red signs... Or the blue apron... With her brown hair, blowing... Now the hand that she held out was covered with a white glove. The aviator fellow, coming, in the taxi. Her face, her neck, her,– Good God... He mustn't lose Her... If she smoked cigarettes, perhaps she'd,– "I was going to Brussels tomorrow," he said suddenly. He came near her, touched her. "I was hoping,– that you'd,– perhaps, come with me. Will you?" A mistake... God, she'd be angry... It was all over, over... His eyes, pleading, loving... God, if she knew,–

Anne laughed. "I'd be arrested if I did go," she said. "They've got twelve Y.M.C.A. men in the jug up there already." She held her hand out. She'd cry in one minute...

He looked at it. Hard as nails, this Woman, in her fine clothes. And yet,– her eyes... The Aviator cousin, shaking hands, saluting... He clasped the hand she held out. Like a man's, her handshake... Her eyes, looking humorous, looking sorry... 'Good-bye. You've been good to me, Captain,' she was saying... There was a white glove between her hand and his hand...

The puffing taxi started. Her eyes,– She knew... The white-gloved hand waved to him. A white hat, above the folded hood of the old taxi... He stood, alone, under the crowded arcade...

...

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The arcade... He couldn't remember just how long he'd stood there. To go back to the hills, the men, the life there... So it was all a dream, the Girl in the blue apron... The Girl who'd marched beside him through the forest... His Girl, who'd come back after they'd told him that she'd gone home. The Girl he'd, he'd... God...

A city. Crowds, walking up and down. No one to talk to... Folks going home to supper... No one to eat with... Didn't even know which way to find the Main Street... Women... Women looking at him, with red lips, and eyes that,– There'd been a woman with red lips, who'd,– 'Till tomorrow...' That had been,– more than a week now... No, only last night... Someone to talk to... He stepped into the street and stopped a horse cab.

"Rue Letellier," he said. "Numero Van Seez."

...

Anne put her feet up next to Randolph's in the bounding taxi. She took her hat off, rumpled her hair up, leaned back next him. He looked down at her, laughing. God, what an afternoon... His last in Paris...

"Whew!" Anne said...

...

Morning. Randolph going. His taxi rolling toward the station. Anne sat beside him, behind the pile of luggage. They'd dined at Foyot's, they'd gone to the opera, they'd sat for an hour on Randolph's two trunks, talking. That was War... And now, Randolph would take a train and then a boat, and then, then,– You couldn't think across the gap that lurked there...

"If it weren't for Ros I wouldn't go at all," said Randolph.

"We've changed," Anne said.

"We've seen Life."

"And Death." They rode on, silent. "Randolph, are you afraid?" she asked him.

"Afraid? I'm in a funk. It's going to be the worst thing that we've done yet,– to get home. Some people didn't change at all. Ros didn't. Your Captain man,– I imagine he'll still fit on Main Street. But you and I,– well, we saw more of it. Square pegs when we left, – round ones when we get back. Do you think we'll ever fit snug in the old holes?"

"Perhaps after a while the corners will grow."

"But Hell," said Randolph, "who wants the corners? Except my leg,– that's a corner I could stand having back again..." He raised himself, turned in the moving taxi. The Place de la Concorde, its pavements shining... The Obelisk... The statues, misty yellow... Garlands of flowers on the lady Strassburg... Blue shadows under the porticoes of the old Crillon... Palaces, watching Americans pass, as they had watched kings and emperors and Germans all pass... The taxi, making for the rue Royale in purple shadow. The Made-

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leine... Old women setting out bunches of dahlias under awnings... Sun, speckling, under sycamores, the pavements. La Belle France... Paris... Randolph tossed a kiss across his shoulder. "So that's good-bye to her!" He slumped down in the seat. Pain,– his damned leg...

...

The station. A porter grabbing the bags, following them, his blue smock, his little pushcart. Randolph limping. The train shed, full of departing 'Welfare Workers.' Talking, laughing, calling to each other. One woman pulled another out of the way for Randolph: 'Look out. Wounded...'

"Bah!" muttered Randolph. "Go home and be a wounded veteran!" They walked on, down the platform. "Come back soon, and keep me company, Anne, won't you? I'll be lonely."

"But you'll have Ros,–"

"Yes." He paused. "But there are some things she doesn't,– understand," said Randolph. He paid the porter. "Tiens, mon gars! Bonne chance!" He held his hand out. The little Frenchman grasped it.

"Bon voyage, mon Capitaine!" The porter's hand jerked to his cap, palm outward...

"It's queer to say good-bye and know we'll both live long enough to see each other again," Anne said. "I wonder if we'll ever be able to say good-bye without remembering,–"

"God, they were good days, though!" said Randolph. "You got a kick out of just feeling yourself alive then. We may get used to Life without the salt, but,–" He pulled himself up into the carriage. His damn leg... He smiled down at her. Learn to smile through the damned pain... "Those were brave days, Anne!" The train moved. She waved.

"Brave days..." she called.

...

Randolph, gone... The Great Adventure, ending... Anne wandered through the station. Stations... Safe harbors, now, for travellers and commuters... No agony, now,– and no kick... A crowd waiting to take the train to Brussels. Knowing that if they got on the train, they'd get to Brussels... Knowing, almost, what time they'd get to Brussels... No uncertainty... And no kick... Anne stood outside the station. Where to turn next? Nothing to do now... A tall American coming up the rue de Londres toward the station, looking down, talking to someone at his elbow. The Captain. The Captain, holding the elbow of a short, dark girl... A girl with reddened lips and almond-shaped black eyes... Eyes that laughed up at his... That locked,– Lips that,– Ugh... A porter, following them, carrying their baggage. They were coming nearer... Turning in at the station... Anne walked behind a pillar. Round it, as they walked past beyond it. Watched

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his square shoulders as he stood aside, holding the swing door. Saw him smile down as she dipped under his arm... Saw him follow... Saw the door swinging, swinging...

"Going to Brussels," Anne said...

...

The Boulevard Haussmann. Unbearable to be doing nothing. To be waiting... In war, when you had waited, you had had the thrill of The Unknown before you... Had known that some day you would move... And that what you moved to, was sure to be Adventure... Now, nothing to come but orders to go home... America... A square hole, for the round pegs... Must move, somewhere... Couldn't wait three weeks doing nothing... Would go ask for a pass to go to Rheims tomorrow. Feel a train, moving. The Captain,– going to Brussels... Without her... With,– with... Well, it was a great war...

...

"What can I do for you, sister?" Stout man, inside a window labelled "PASSES." "Can't give you girls any passes. They don't want Welfare Workers travellin'. Funny! Seems like everybody wants to go somewheres right now..." Anne left the window. Didn't give a damn what this man told her... Go to Rheims tomorrow if she wanted... She'd see the whole front while they kept her waiting... Had her last Order of Transport in her pocket... Gates had made it read 'Coblenz to Coblenz via Paris.' Gates had hoped she'd come back... Couldn't go back, now... But she could travel on it... 'OUR LAST WORK FOR THE BOYS MUST BE OUR,–' Damn these Welfare Workers... Nothing to cry about... Childish to feel like crying...

...

Evening. After dinner. Nobody left at Madame de Mourgues' except the French, now,– 'Nous autres.' Anne felt alone tonight. She stepped through one of the tall windows to the balcony outside the salon. "Vous êtes triste ce soir, Mademoiselle!" A small, plump Frenchman stood in the window. Dessandier d'Orbigny, son of the old Marquise... Madame the Marquise had told them often about her brave son, fighting near Verdun. He had become a romantic hero. Then, proudly, at last she introduced this little man with his sallow, plump cheeks, pale blue eyes, blond mustachios curled at the ends. Dessandier, at first in uniform, with all his ribbons, his Croix de Guerre with four palms... Dessandier now demobilized, in the nattiest of fine, blue serges, yellow spats... "Merci, Mademoiselle!" He took the cigarette she held out. Randolph and Dessandier had become fast friends over the Quartermaster's good tobacco... "Mademoiselle a l'air tout-à-fait désolée ce soir." He stepped out beside her, leaned against the railing, arms crossed.

"My cousin left today."

"And the brave Captain of Infantry? Ah, Mademoiselle!" Des-

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sandier shook his manicured forefinger, "I have surveyed him when he approached you yesterday. I saw him for the length of an eye-wink only, in the little salon, but tout-de-suite I said to myself 'A-ah! L'Amour!'" Dessandier's finger next to his nose...

"A friend," said Anne, "I occupied myself with the canteen for his soldiers, là-bas." Lie... Lie...

"But Mademoiselle," Dessandier sat down on the window ledge, clasping his knees. "Why do you pretend that these men do not fall in love with you when you make march their canteens? Ah, you Americans! You fix yourselves an ideal,– an ideal so elevated that the human race cannot attain it,– and then you persuade yourselves that this Ideal is Truth. That is one of your grand illusions,– this about men and women. You go here and there with men,– you and your cousin, you and this captain of infantry,– My mother tells me that there were others. You pretend that they are not in love with you, that they admire you for your brain, your intelligence, for n'importe quoi. While in truth, Mademoiselle, they like you because you are pretty, because you are young. You Americans, you camouflage the Truth, while we French, we admit that we love women because they are pretty, are chic. We do not send them to make march canteens with the army. We do not permit our sisters to be nurses,–"

"And because it fails sometimes, that is not to say that our ideal cannot be made to work." Anne gazed up at the pink clouds.

"It is always thus that a young nation thinks," said the Frenchman, "all countries, when they are in a state of barbarism,–"

"Then you consider us in a state of barbarism, Monsieur?"

"Ah, oui! Barbarians! Beautiful barbarians! Your soldiers,– so young, so strong. There are no others like them. But barbarians, I assure you. I had the honor of dining the other day at the mess of the American officers near to Verdun. There was only one thing that seemed to interest them: how superior America was to France in the matter of automobiles, and in the matter of bathrooms. I have quitted that table thinking that America must be inhabited by people who know nothing whatever of the good things of life,– people who do not think except of their bodies, their conveniences, their business. Can you believe me, Mademoiselle, if I tell you that during all that repast, these American officers have not expressed one single idea?"

"I'm afraid I can." Anne smiled. The Captain... Richardson... Burt... Sitting silent, spooning their peas...

"America is as France was at the epoch of the Merovingians," said Dessandier, "like the barbarians, she regards women as the comrades of the men in battle. We French know that women are made to love and to be loved. We know that they have an enormous influence on men, but all through love."

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"We pretend that our ideal of equality works," said Anne, "and if we pretend hard enough, it does work, in a way,–"

"Ah! But do not demand that the universe should pretend with you! Your President, he is your Idéaliste en Chef. He imagines to himself that nations are no longer going to fight,– that he can so organize them that there shall be no more war. Mademoiselle, when men stop loving, then will nations stop fighting! To believe that peoples will no longer fight, is like believing that young men, in the presence of Woman, will no longer fall in love. He would have us throw down our arms and organize a universal government. That is naïveté, Mademoiselle! He would have France, who has been so often at a death grip with the Germans, renounce war, treat the Germans like friends! P-f-f-t!" Dessandier tossed his palms up. "You are a drôle mixture, you Americans, of preoccupation with material things, and of idealism which can go as far as madness. We French are logical. We look life in the face. We know that human nature is weak."

"C'est-à-dire," said Anne, "you will not admit that things can progress. Men and women can never be friends. Nations can never deal with one another except, in the end, by war. What France and what America were fighting for in this war was not the same thing. You were fighting to have things go on as they were,–"

"And to protect civilization, Mademoiselle, which France has guarded since the Roman conquest." Anne rose. Dessandier followed her into the dim light of the salon. In the vague rooms beyond the ancient mirrors, their images moved softly.

"After the Merovingians, came the age of Louis XIV," said Anne. "There is, then, hope for the barbarians, Monsieur!" In the dim mirrors, her image, passing clumsily among the faded damasks. Dessandier, back to the mantel, fitting strangely into the gentle aristocracy of the old room... He should be dressed in satin, with lace ruffles... "It is not impossible that a new kind of civilization may rise," said Anne.

"Rise from the civilization which France has saved, Mademoiselle!" The face of the Américaine had spirit...

"Among the new barbarians of the West, Monsieur!"

...

The Gare du Nord. 'Mais c'est pas la route de Coblence, Mademoiselle!' the gate keeper, protesting... 'Mais je vais à Coblence par là, Monsieur!' said Anne. A lie,– she wasn't going to Coblenz. Just keeping going... You had to keep going... That restlessness, that gnawed... 'Tenez! Dépêchez!' you'd learned to be brazen... 'Passez, Madame, Passez! Vite! Vite!' Ah, ces Américains...

...

So this was the front, this enormous, vacant garden full of flowers... Anne and two sailors had walked six miles to the Chemin des Dames from Soissons. The sailors carried blue bags. "Us guys c'lects

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souvenirs," they explained, "n' then we sell 'em to the doughboys on the transports. Those birds likes to have somp'n to take home an' show the folks." The sailors jumped about among the daisies and cornflowers and poppies. Oats grew in great clumps, and yellow flowers and purple... "K'out for them hand grenades!" The gobs held out their hands, helping her to jump a trench. Wind, blowing free across the flowers. Why, this was the widest space in France,– like the U.S., this... Anne stumbled over something. Clothes... A man's uniform, grey-green,– the way the prisoners had used to dress at Avency... Boots, trousers, blouse, skin shrinking from a skull,– God... Anne closed her eyes. The dead German's eyes were sinking backward, disappearing in great hollows. Staring. So that was what a man turned into...

"Boy!" The two gobs pounced on the baggy uniform and turned it over. It was those grinning teeth that they were kicking... Stooping down, pulling them out, putting them in their pockets... Tossing them in the blue bag...

"Say, them'll make good souvenirs," the gobs said...

...

A white road, leading out into a desert. The road was broad and smooth and solid. It wound among piles of débris, with now and then a sign post stuck up at a crossroad, the name of a town printed on it in black letters. Anne rode in an automobile with a French officer. He had stood in the street at Verdun, while his chauffeur fixed a tire. Anne had asked him if he knew how one could reach the American cemetery at Romagne. A low bow: 'I will take you, Mademoiselle. I pass that way.' Here she was, bowling out into the desert with him...

A hill, out in the vast stretch of emptiness. On it, white crosses, thousands of them, planted like corn, in straight rows, curving upward with the hill's slope. At the top of the slope, a tall, white flag-pole, on it a flag whipping the breeze. The first live thing in all that vast destruction... And under the flag that huge wheat-field of crosses. The French officer stood up, a small, blue figure, balancing in the jiggling car, his face toward the crosses, his hand, palm outward, held stiffly at the vizor of his cap. Saluting your flag... Your dead... Anne swallowed. The separate crosses blurred into a white mist...

The car stopped by a low, sprawling barrack. 'Headquarters of the American cemetery, Madame!' Anne held her hand out.

"Thank you," she said, "thank you!"

...

The car rolled off in white dust. Alone, in the middle of the desert... Only the dead across the road there, on the great hill, under their flag... 'Miss Wentworth!' Why, it was Mr. Bird of the Red Cross. Sorting out the dead he was, now... They'd got twenty-three thousand of 'em already up there,– he waved his arm toward the great hill...

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He had a truck,– he'd take her to the Argonne, show her the sights. The girls,– there were two of 'em in there,– would give her supper, and a bed. "God, but it's nice to see you," Mr. Bird said...

...

Night. A shell exploding somewhere in the blackness. They went off still. The war, echoing... Anne turned on the hard bed. An army cot,– your thigh bones stuck in, the blanket scratched your cheek,– why was it easier to sleep on beds like that now... Another explosion. The Argonne had been a green glade in the twilight... Houses, made of bits of board and dirt, like the ones she and Geoffrey used to make long, long ago down in the woods... Stillness. Another shell, exploding. Sleepy... Queer you could sleep here... You had to have noises... now... to sleep...

...

"Vous avez l'air fatiguée, Mademoiselle!" Dessandier drew his chair up to the table. Strange creature, this Américaine... And yet anyway more amusing to talk to than these old ladies... "Vous avez voyagé? Ah, vous Américains! You give yourselves too much to do. For me, a lunch at Foyot's with an old friend, a look at the Museum of the Luxembourg, an apéritif,–"

"I have seen the forest of the Argonne," said Anne, "the hill of the Mort Homme, Montfaucon,–" The smile, fading from Dessandier... Lines in his forehead, deepening... His shoulders, drooping... The dapperness,– melting...

"Ah, Mademoiselle! For two years I have stood in a trench, regarding that little hill there!" He sat, his hand limp on the white cloth, gazing across the table. Not seeing his mother, the Marquise, spooning her soup... Not seeing the jardinière between the windows. Seeing that low hill of upturned sand... The skeletons of trees... The silhouettes of buildings all in ruins... Anne watched him. Grey hairs above the man's ears... Lids narrowing about the pale eyes... "I know that country in all its details, je vous promets," he whispered. "I could draw you a picture of it, with the eyes closed. I hope never, as long as I shall live, to see it again!" An old man, eyes shut, shoulders drooping... The dapperness all gone... "Mais enfin,"– he broke a piece of bread and with it mopped his plate,– bonne cuisine, Marie's, – "c'est fini," he snapped. His shoulders straightened. The dapperness returning...

"Oui," said Anne, "c'est fini."

...

Ypres. The Cloth Hall,– one Gothic arch that gleamed white against the blue sky. Well, once you'd seen it, you must go back... Anne turned. Streets, dug through piles of rubbish. Not one building standing in the whole town. Trains, that brought you here, but none, it seemed, that took you back until tomorrow. No hotel. And your orders might be waiting for you in Paris... A British Tommy,– 'e 'ad

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a pal 'oo ran a lorry, 'e'd see if 'e could find 'im, yes Miss... He went off. A great automobile stopped and from it jumped an American telephone girl and a lieutenant. 'Gosh, what a dump!' the girl said. The Lieutenant disappeared into a British barrack.

"Can I go back to Lille with you?" Anne asked the girl.

"Well, I don't know, you see the Lieutenant's taking me on this,–"

"Oh, that's all right," said Anne, "I'll ride in front..."

...

A smooth, white boulevard, that led through desolation. The big car sped along it. Tortured tree trunks... Wheels, half buried in the dirt, with flowers that grew through them. Little crosses there among the weeds, and great things,– 'Un tank, Mademoiselle, abandonné, voilà!' The French chauffeur pointing with his chin... Anne screwed around to see it. The Lieutenant, in the back seat, clasping the telephone girl to his chest, his hat shoved sideways... 'Gosh...' The brown cheeks of the French chauffeur twitching...

"C'est la guerre!" he said...

...

"Yes, your orders have come. We tried to get you all day yesterday. They said you wasn't there." The Y. man in the window handed Anne her passport. "You sail next week. Your steamer ticket? Oh, you girls'll get those on the dock,–"

"You know why that is, don't you?" A girl beside Anne nudged her. "Because they're sending all the Y. men First Class and the girls Second. They know there'd be too much noise made if they gave 'em to us round here,–"

"Nonsense," said Anne. "They can't do that. We've got a right to First Class." She walked away. 'OUR LAST WORK FOR THE BOYS MUST BE OUR,–' Damn the Y.M....

...

Anne lay awake. Queer, in war you had slept. Right through air raids... Slept last night and the night before, with shells exploding, and trains joggling under you... Now, in the silence,– God, was it going to be like this when you got home? Must you keep always hectically moving? She tossed. Tomorrow,– another trip. Just one, last trip that you must make in France before you went home... Home,– God...

...

The train jiggling, jiggling. A flat wheel,– Anne put her head back. In the compartment a sailor, a Red Cross man, two Frenchmen, talking... 'Might's well see the God damn country,' said the sailor. Sleepy... Sleepy... Only on moving trains that you could sleep, now...

...

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Anne walked across a field. In the field, a peasant woman, digging... Across the field, a row of broken houses. Anne's legs were tired. How many fields she'd crossed these two days, hunting... Hunting... Have to go back, and say she couldn't find it... And then, – there it was. Two bits of wood, nailed in the middle... Standing beside a wall. A helmet, hanging... 'First Lieutenant Geoffrey Wentworth. Sixteenth Infantry.' She stood, looking down. Swallowing... Your head bursting... Tears, scorching your eyes... Blurring the world out... Dripping... Dripping... Geoffrey...

...

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BOOK VI

"But to day I leave the galley. Shall I
curse her service then?
God be thanked – whate'er comes after, I have
lived and toiled with Men!"

KIPLING.

"If now, this minute, I were asked 'Would you remain what you were before... or go through it all again?' I should say, 'For God's sake the imprisonment once more, and the horse-flesh.' We think that when we are driven out of the usual path everything is all over for us; but it is just here that the new and the good begins."

TOLSTOY: 'War and Peace.'

"So it hath come to me – not pride,
Nor yet conceit, but on the 'ole
(If such a term may be applied,)
The makin's of a bloomin' soul.
But now, discharged, I fall away
To do with little things again...
Gawd, 'oo knows all I cannot say,
Look after me in Thamesfontaine!"

KIPLING.

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BOOK VI

A GREAT ship, quivering onward, her stern deck hanging high above blue water... Below, white foam sizzling, falling away, leaving a trail of whiteness... A trail into the sunlight. And at the trail's end, green fields, castles on a white cliff,– France. France... Anne clung to the ship's rail, looking out along that white way that led backwards. To plunge over, into that white foam... To drift back... Back, to that life that had been burning, vivid... A life of tears and laughter. Life that called out the savage that was hidden under all Youth. Youth of the world, who'd all been there, together. Life with one single purpose: to win the damn war. A primitive thing. You fed men, and they loved you. Easy. Simple. France,– a symbol of that concentrated, pulsing life of war-time. Anne stretched her hand out toward the green shore that was shrinking. No use... Youth wouldn't be there... Youth, leaving France to old people and to children... To all that ancient civilization she had guarded... Youth, going westward. The shore a tiny strip now, across the blue sea, growing smaller, smaller. To go back... Go back... Climb this rail, fling yourself into the white foam, sizzling backward... France disappearing. A minute more, and the world would be a great, blue, empty circle...

And Life, as empty as the circle... One world dead. The other, not yet born. No strength to turn and look to the westward,– Weariness... Weariness, hanging behind you like a dull cloud. Restlessness, that held the weariness at arm's length. When you stopped moving, weariness would push you under... Couldn't turn. Couldn't face toward the new world. Easier to jump, now, and lose oneself among the sizzling bubbles floating backward... Blue, swallowing up the land. Would swallow up Life, too... Against the wooden rail Anne's fingers tightened. Hold on! Her mother and Josiah waiting... Loving... One didn't do things like that,– Didn't quit. The great ship moving, now, to a new rhythm. Up, and around, and down. Up, and around, and down. Up, and around, and,– A second-class passenger put her head across the rail, mouth open. Anne turned, and made her way toward the bow deck..

...

Night. Anne leaned her back against the bulkhead of the deck house. Above her, the huge funnel was cutting silently across the dim stars. Soft smoke, drifting backward. Below, the great ship... Tier below tier, down to the moving ocean... Out, between slung lifeboats, Anne could see the water sliding backward. No submarines lurking

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this time... No tang, any more, to moving across it... No kick to living...

Ought to go down and find out how Miss Hobbs was... Poor Miss Hobbs,– she'd been too old to come to this war. Forty... Awfully old, that... The war had turned her hair grey. She was worn out and sick, and lying in that wretched inside stateroom in the second cabin. Rotten of the Y.,– you rated First Class. And the Y. knew it,– that was why they hadn't dared give you your tickets back in Paris. Anne groaned. The crowded dock house, on the pier that morning... A big sign, 'WELFARE WORKERS'... Welfare,– God... Gayly dressed civilians pushing their way among them, glancing at their shabby uniforms, and laughing... Mr. Judd, of Arkansas, puffing toward them, his hands full of tickets: 'Women Sec'etaries on one side, men on the other, please, Friends!' The men had got theirs first,– of course,– that was their ethics,– When they showed you a picture of 'The wife' they themselves were always sitting in an armchair, 'The wife' standing. The men's were First Class tickets and the women's Second... 'After the way we worked our hands off,' Miss Hobbs had sobbed behind Anne, 'and those old fools sat there and did nothing.' Tough on Miss Hobbs to be shut in there with those ladies' maids, who were always talking... Anne drew her knees up, clasped her arms about them.

Last night she'd been sitting on a high parapet above Brest Harbor... Twilight... The worn toes of her shoes dangling against space, and the crowded quai below her... Sailors scrabbling in and out... Rowboats, tenders, ropes, the smell of barnacles on wet piers, the smell of sewerage, garlic, of people unwashed... The noise of voices, talking in strange tongues. Beyond it, the grey harbor. The huge, dim silhouettes of transports, lying at anchor... It had been from a transport that Joan had,– mustn't think of that... Beyond the harbor's mouth, a strip of grey Atlantic, leading homeward... Home,– God! That sinking feeling that attacked you,– A young M.P. officer saluting,– why it was Henry Hull, a friend of Geoffrey's, grown strangely older. Leaning on the parapet beside her, talking. Never got anywhere near the damn war,– just did this M.P. stuff... Spent all last week rowing about out there among the transports. See, – pointing,– those were his men, in rowboats, going slowly round and round the transports,– if you didn't keep inspecting 'em they'd just drift on the far side, and sit, talking, smoking,– 'What for?' 'Oh, people kind of lose their nerve 'bout going home. They're always jumping,–' Anne scrabbled back, off the parapet. That feeling... God... God... 'We pull 'em out and try to bring 'em to.' 'Oh, I see,'–

A man rushed past Anne in the darkness of the top deck. A man in uniform, hands clasped behind him; his Sam Browne belt unfastened, dangling; blouse unbuttoned; hair tossing in the night breeze. He stopped between the lifeboats, looking over. He jerked

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himself round, paced back, jumped as he saw Anne's white face in the darkness. He paced back again slowly, stopped beside her: "My God! I hate to leave France!"

"I think we all do." Dark... She could hardly see him.

"How long have you been over?" said the man. He sat down, leaning forward on his elbows, eyes on his shoes.

"Two years."

"I've been eighteen." The man sat, silent. "Eighteen months, really." Anne sat still, face back, eyes on the huge, dark funnel. He wanted to talk, this man... Better just let him go on... "Fighting the battle of Paris all this time. God! If they knew what they were doing when they sent us!" The man laughed. No mirth in his laughter... "When I went over, I thought the world just couldn't wait for me to get there. Reported the first day before I'd had my breakfast. And then I dawdled round the place two weeks before they found some silly thing for me to do there."

"I know," said Anne, "I know. I used to work there." There had been lieutenants,– but no, this man was older...

"I managed automobiles. Planned the old Colonel's joy rides. Saw that the whole place was supplied with candy and tobacco,– You know how the thing went. Having a damn good time in Paris in the evenings. Coasting at a right smart rate down the big hill."

"I know," Anne said. Wish he'd look up... Wish you could see his face...

"I used to justify myself," the man said. "Used to say that if the higher-ups wanted me to stay round there, doing nothing, why I could do nothing as well as any of 'em. Saw that to hope to get to the front was like the hope for Heaven. Said that what became of me didn't matter any more than if I got killed. Just one man, more or less... Thrown on the Junk Heap for the Great Ideal. I used to really think this war was worth it,–"

"Yes, so it was," said Anne.

"Then I got delegated to stand around the Crillon,– the Peace Conference. I saw that the whole thing had been just a damned farce. This talk about international justice,– just a camouflage. Before you get your youth rubbed off, you like ideals. These crafty foxes over here saw that. They waved ideals to make us go to battle. After we'd rallied and turned the whole trick for them, they told us all to go to Hell and fry there. God, some of us didn't need to be told,–" He rose, stood with his back toward her.

"But there's the League of Nations," Anne said. "That is worth it,–"

"The old men at home are going to stick a knife in that, too. Wilson belongs in our generation in this mess. A sophomore, with ideals, among a lot of crafty old men. At home he'll find other old men just as crafty, ready to hit him in the back."

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"Oh, no. I believe,–" Anne began,– but he was walking away, into the darkness.

"I've learned not to kid myself," the man said...

...

'Good evening, sister.' Two Y.M.C.A. men stopped beside Anne, sat down. If only the old fools wouldn't call you sister... 'This is a comfortable boat, I'll tell the world!' said one. 'Such food!' said the other. 'Say, you couldn't get a better meal in Paris!' 'Say, you ought to see the saloon!' said the first one. 'It's furnished like that there palace of Ver-Sales. Don't hardly feel at home there. And our stateroom, my! Beds! Say, how are you girls fixed? Hope you're comfortable down there,–' Anne got up. Good God... "Thanks!" she said.

...

Morning. The air, dead... "Oh, God!" groaned the ladies' maid in the top berth across from Anne. "Say, how c'n you be sick in the top one?" Anne climbed down, handed her up a basin. Miss Hobbs, in the lower berth, turned her face to the wall.

"I'm going to get you a stateroom in the First Class Cabin today," Anne said...

...

It cost fifty dollars extra, and there was just one. Anne walked back through long painty passages, whose walls came at you. 'I can't afford it,' Miss Hobbs' eyes closed, face green... "But you can make the Y. pay," said Anne. "They're supposed to send us First Class. The men are first,– surely we did more than they did at the great war,–" She argued. Miss Hobbs' head shook. Tears trickled to her pillow. 'I don't dare.' "Well," said Anne, "I do."

...

Lying in the sun, in a little hollow of the canvas cover of a lifeboat. High up. Nothing but the boat's rim of canvas between you and the calm, blue, ocean down there... Sailing through space. Between the sky and water. Like dying, this... Suspended between two worlds... One little lurch, and you'd roll off, plunge into the slippery blue below there... Not your fault if the ship lurched... That would be easy... Easy... Steady! Better get back, get off of here. You might let go,–

...

Anne followed the Chief Steward through the dining saloon. Thank God he wasn't going to put her at a table with civilians. Three aviators at the table,–

"Hello, Miss Wentworth!" It was Lieutenant Colby. He introduced the others.

"And how is Avency? Did you stop there on your way from Coblenz?" Why did the thought of Avency make you feel homesick? You must go back, someday,– But there would be nothing to go

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back to... It would be all gone... The world of the last two years, so much more real, so much more vivid than anything in the old world, would be vanished...

"Oh Avency was crowded," the short, dark Lieutenant across the table put in. "Everyone rushing up there, trying to keep from getting sent home."

"God! Yes. The pilots were in a panic at getting sent home!" Colby laughed. "And you can't blame 'em." The three sat looking at the flowers in the table's center. "But there's a bunch of ground officers up there now," said Colby, "all languishing to get home. One of 'em told Shinn he had to go because his wife was going to have a baby. Shinn said the fellow had three service stripes on!" They all laughed.

"Gee, but it's nice to see someone who knows Avency!" said Colby. "You can't talk to these civilians who've come over here to buy things. They don't know anything. There's no place to,– to begin."

"And if you start explaining,–" said the dark one,–

"Some things you can't very well explain," said Colby.

"Wouldn't mind it so much if they didn't all expect you to be a hero," said the dark one. "If I were to tell 'em I'd flown just once a month, for my pay,– terrified all the time,–"

"Well, you can't blame 'em," said Colby. "Filled up on a lot of Liberty Loan rot. Speakers telling 'em lies. And publishers filling 'em up on silly letters." Colby laughed. "They published one of my letters in my home town. When I heard it, I stayed drunk for three days."

"They ought to publish the journal of someone who fought the Battle of Paris," said the light one.

"Ye-ah. That bird who sits in the smoking room all day,–" the dark one stopped, embarrassed.

"Who is he?" said Anne. That man on the top deck the first night out... She'd seen him since, moving among the lifeboats like a shadow...

"Name's Barnaby. He's writing a journal that he calls the 'Film of Failure.' It ought to be a great book."

"Oh," said Anne. Barnaby,– a boy with light hair... Boy who'd reported before he'd had his breakfast... Who wouldn't sit down, because he was going to the front, right off...

"No, the best way to do," said Colby, "is not to talk to any civilians at all."

"But what are we going to do," said Anne, "when we get home?"

...

A little girl, playing hop-scotch among the lifeboats. Short, green dress, blowing. Stout legs jumping, jumping, curly hair flopping. Anne stopped to watch her. If only the child would fall overboard then you could jump... That would be an excuse. Down, down, into

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the moving blue sea... Forget... And be forgotten... Steady... Anne went on walking. Steady... Steady... Better go down to the other deck, where you couldn't,– Steady... Your head swimming, swimming...

...

A woman in a scarlet béret sat in the steamer chair next Anne's. Her lips painted red, to match the béret. Skirts, very short. She laid her book down. "I've been over, buying," she said.

"Buying what?" Anne asked.

"Why," the beaded eyelashes lifted in surprise, "clothes, of course. I'm Susi, of Susi and Jane's, in Fifty-Seventh Street. We sure have had to hurry some, since the good times,–"

"What good times?" Anne asked. The woman looking at her, blue pencilled eyebrows in a wide stare.

"Why, where've you been this last two years?" she said. "Don't you know that there's been good times in the U.S.?"

"Oh," said Anne, "I've been at the war,–"

"Why sure," the woman went on. "People making more money than they ever made. Why this is my second trip across since the war stopped. Last time I landed Jane was on the pier waving hundred-dollar bills at me. 'Susi,' she says, 'we'll soon be riding in a limousine.' Say, what's your line?"

"My what? Oh, I was just through college when the war,–"

"College won't get you anywhere," said Susi. "You won't make any money outa *those* jobs. You gotta *sell things* in the U.S. Say, where you going?" Anne rushed toward the companionway that led out to the sun on the top deck. Scramble up, up... Get away from people... People talking, people dressed up in costumes... People who didn't know,– Out to the sky, the sea... 'Good times.' Young men, dying... Men, twisting in agony, through the black nights... Men groping with their hands because their eyes had,– Men without legs, cursing, learning to walk all over... Cigarettes, burning men's sheets because their hands were,– Young Barnaby, who'd left his Youth in Paris... 'We're making more money than we ever,–' God... White crosses, like wheat, on the great hill at Romagne. Twenty-three thousand of them, all young. Thousands in other places, and France, – 'If all the A.E.F. were to drop dead, that would be what the French lost,–' 'Good times...' God... The Susi woman would soon be riding in a limousine... Riding where?

...

Evening. Only one more after this one. Then,– Good God... Anne lay on the canvas of the lifeboat. Watching the stars. Under her, the gentle cadence of the ocean. If one could only float on like this forever... Out into the vastness of the Universe... Like Death, this... Watching the stars go past... Only that Death would not end,– Somebody stopped, looked at her, walked on. She sat up. A figure in

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uniform slunk into the shadows. She slipped down, stood leaning on the railing of the deck house. Jazz music, coming through the open transom... Barnaby, slinking toward her from the shadow... He stopped, leaned on the railing next her. Stood, gazing at the lifeboat's silhouette against the ocean...

"Good evening," Anne said. Silence. His small moustache twitched. His hands, clasping and unclasping... "Well, we're almost,—" she stopped. She couldn't,— Silence... Silence... It seemed ages... Then suddenly the man turned, and walked off...

...

The last day. Anne stuffed things in her trunk. Her mother and Josiah... What if they shouldn't be there? What if something had happened to them since she started? If she should have to face that horrible, great world by herself? She paced the decks. Strange... Strange... You went to war, rejoicing... Entirely amused and unafraid, and thrilled at Danger... You came home to your own land, that you had longed for, and as you neared it, you were terrified...

...

The aviators ordered champagne for their dinner. 'Last drink we'll get!' they said. They poured Anne's glass full. 'Damn your uniform. *We* know you never take any,— Come! This is the last time!' Colby rose, holding his glass up, "Louise!" Anne stood, clinking her glass against the others. A narrow street... Manure piles... Mud, oozing with dark juice... A doorway, and a dark girl standing in it, hair slicked, feet in black felt slippers, behind her a hallway painted bright blue... The smell of French mud and the snort of airplanes... At the next table, Susi, sitting bare-armed, in a gown of silver, watching... Anne laughed.

"And Avency-the-Dry!" she said...

...

Breakfast. Through the portholes, the green shore of Staten Island. A white house, made of wood. The great ship lying still, all the vibration vanished. The vibration gone right out of Life now... 'Well, it's most over.' Colby, and the dark one, and the blond one... The joy gone out of Colby... Grapefruit, sending out little spurts of acid. Eating in silence. Knowing the end had,—

"Barnaby went overboard last night," said the dark one. Colby looked at him sharply. Damn him, why couldn't he have kept still...

"Man on the rear deck saw him jump." The blond one sipped his coffee.

"Oh," said Anne, "why,—" She stopped. Shouldn't have asked that... You must be innocent, right to the end... The dark one and the light one looking at each other, flushing... Colby's eyes meeting hers... Colby, serious. A frivolous man, whose seriousness counted...

"You've been over there two years," he said, "I guess you know..."

...

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Among the crowds in the dark dock house, faces... Her mother's pale, sweet face, the clear features outlined against a black veil, her eyes,– those lovely, grey eyes... That saw everything you felt and understood it... Her father, paler, thinner, his beard grown white, tears in his blue eyes... They saw her,– they were waving. Anne threw down her suit case, ran toward them...

...

Fifth Avenue. Its scrambled shops... Its uncouth glitter... The glorious new, sandwiched with the sordid old facing the deep street. Two rows of automobiles and busses, going, stopping, going, stopping ... People... Girls with short skirts... Men in civilian clothes, fat and anæmic. Men's faces should be tanned, worn by the weather... People hurrying. People looking in shop windows. The taxi, moving slowly, going, stopping. Anne, between her father and her mother, gazing out the window. Everyone well dressed... Everyone in a hurry... She looked round at her mother. How thin... How grey her hair had grown across her temples... Anne clasped the thin hand in its black glove.

'Why, these people don't know there's been a war, do they?' she said...

...

Room in a huge hotel. Everything new. Everything ugly. Everything German-looking. Windows wider than they were high, that slid up and down,– never would really open... White walls, purple curtains, twin beds, door, with a mirror in it. Anne pushed it open. "Gosh!" She stood still, gazing. White tiled walls, shining, meeting the white floor in a small curve. Enormous, shiny tub, built in, and solid. A nickel railing to hold onto when you got out, glass rods to hold the towels, white porcelain faucets. Anne turned a faucet. Hot water, belching forth, sending up steam, hissing... Unlimited hot water... Could let it run till the whole, huge tub was full, let it run over onto the tile floor with its curved corners... Anne undid her collar. A bath... Tomorrow morning, another... Tomorrow night, another... Baths every day now until you grew old... She slipped down into the glorious, shining, white thing. Water, pale green, that covered you all over. Lightened your body... A bathroom, spotless, smell-less. A thing of perfection, thing of beauty... The U.S....

...

"Shall we lunch in the roof garden?" Her mother, leading the way toward the elevator,– That brisk, small, black figure... That would be nice... It sounded outdoors,– but it wasn't. All glassed in. Worse than the hotel. 'We'll have whatever you want,' her father saying. 'We'll be extravagant for this once.' What she wanted was cereal, and cream,– real cream that wasn't sour,– she hadn't seen any for all these years,– Heavens, just that cost more than a whole meal in Paris! What to talk to them about? Where to begin?

"You didn't mind my staying over till they signed the treaty?"

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"You were quite right, my dear!" Josiah, looking at her proudly, "I only wish you'd all marched up to Berlin!"

"But,–" Anne looked at him,– surely her father couldn't,– "that would have meant war!" Her mother, looking at her, troubled. "It's a poor treaty," Anne said, "it can't be enforced. But, anyway, we got the League of Nations. That's what we went for,–" She stopped. Her mother, worried...

"Your father thinks we shouldn't agree to the treaty," she said. "He feels we shouldn't join the League of Nations." Anne's spoon stopping, going into her saucer slowly. She looked at Josiah. Surely he couldn't,– Scrap the Great Ideal? Why that was what you'd gone for,– That Idea had gotten you through the,– Why, Geoffrey,–

"If Wilson gets this country into that League," said Josiah, "we'll get embroiled in every war in Europe. We ought to have kept on going this time till we'd whipped the Germans,– put 'em where they never could fight another."

"You can't kill children," Anne stopped. Small, round, pink faces, smiling... Eager fists stretching toward you wilting flowers... He couldn't really,–

"I agree with you that the treaty's no good," said Josiah. "If Wilson had taken anybody with him who knew,– Root and Lodge,– instead of..." Anne sat, squeezing bread into a pellet. Her father, old ... White... Of a generation that came between wars. Raised on the tradition of the Civil War,– that grand illusion... That masterpiece of whitewash. He couldn't understand it... Didn't know,– And what he thought, he thought from patriotism. No interests at stake,– no ounce of selfishness about it... Had given what he cared for most in this world,– that was written on his face. Would be, forever... She loved him... Loved him... Don't listen to him... Just remember that you love him... Hold onto yourself,– 'Don't let's talk about it,' her mother, saying... Grey eyes, looking at you... Understanding... 'Here's your cream, dear...'

Rich, thick stuff pouring, dripping. Two years ago, in Bordeaux, you would have given a week of life to see some... Now,– it didn't matter...

"Gosh, that's great!" Anne said...

...

She lay on the hotel bed. The whole world swinging gently, with the rhythm of the ocean... Rhythm got into you and stayed there... Rhythm of War that got into you, and,– A bell ringing, ringing... 'Your telephone, dear!' Her mother, in the next room. Ah, yes, one had telephones in Peace,– 'Mr. Suydam, calling on Miss Wentworth,' a nasal voice. 'Shall I send the party up?' 'Heavens, no!' Banality, provincialism,– didn't they know you didn't receive in your room? They should have brought a card, and,– 'No, I'll come down.' Click. She hung the thing up. How they hurried...

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The elevator, dropping out from under you, making your stomach rise, your knees feel wobbly. Sinking... Sinking... People, staring at the insignia on your sleeve. Didn't want to see Jerry... Didn't want to see anyone... Like being in fancy dress to have a uniform on,– 'Anne!' There was Jerry, pouncing at her, shaking her hand, his keen eyes gleaming through the heavy glasses... His jaw trembling, strangely. Nice person, Jerry... Homely,– his great, freckled face, his red hands... 'Come out and have tea with me somewhere, Anne,' he was saying...

...

"Let's eat outdoors," said Anne. They climbed down off a bus at Grant's tomb. Below them, the Hudson shimmered in the afternoon sun. A badly kept park sloped to a railroad track at its edge. Across its shabby grass old papers fluttered.

"It can't be done," said Jerry. "Everything's glassed in. Our grandfathers got more fresh air than they wanted, you know. Their sons still think it's smart to be always under cover. If we were in Paris, now,–" Anne closed her eyes.

"God! Don't!"

...

The restaurant at Clairmont. It would be lovely here, if one could get out... Beyond the screens, the glass... Jerry, looking at you... The Problem, coming... Say, something, quick, avoid it...

"Why don't you write a book, Jerry? The truth about the war,– and no bunk? People here seem to know so little about it. Mother,–" Anne smiled,– "seems to think it was a pure, wonderful crusade, fine young men and women, fighting for Justice. I'm afraid to say anything, for fear I'll shock her. And Father,– doesn't even know what we were there for. Thinks we fought from hatred of the Germans,– Seems to me if people really knew what it was like,– If women knew,–"

"But they don't want to know," said Jerry. Anne's face, so thin, so sort of transparent,– all eyes... "All they want to do right now about the War is to forget it." He watched her. So she didn't know the country was going to let them down? That would hurt Anne... "All they want to do is to make the country safe for people to get rich in. You'll see that. While the war was on, business was booming. Now things are starting down hill,– It happens after every war, only the business men don't seem to know it,–"

"Why does it happen?" Keep his mind moving... Avoid the Problem...

"Oh, they get high prices for their goods in war, and pay high wages. Labor's scarce, you see, and fetches a high price. With their high wages, working people consume goods. Then when war's over, prices start down. Merchants find themselves with a lot of goods on hand made at high cost, and they have to get rid of them for less than cost.

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Someone's got to lose. Manufacturers try to shove it on the wage-earners by stopping production, and reducing wages. There'll be unemployment, and there'll be strikes. Fellers from the army, now, can't get jobs. So when somebody shrieks that the League of Nations will get 'em into more wars, they're agin' it."

"But are they really going to vote against the treaty?"

"They'll vote for anything that they think will bring the 'good old times' back. They're in a panic about being poor. What they want now is to ride in automobiles. The war was just an episode, over here, and now it's over, and very little harm done to the U.S. You'll have to forget the war, Anne,–"

"And admit that everything we did was wasted?" No use to talk... The Problem would come up... A look on men's faces when they felt like,– It was coming...

"You'd better marry me, Anne." There, he'd done it... "It would be a new adventure for you, you know. It's a pretty poor world, this, that you've come back to. And I,– I feel just the same as I did." He leaned back, looking at her. Tears in her eyes... Her throat working strangely... God, perhaps she,– Why did you do it here,– this table in between you? If you could take her in your arms perhaps she,– But Anne wasn't the kind you'd,–

"It's funny, Jerry, you only saw me three times,–"

"Once was enough, in France. But what got me was, when I was talking about my old beliefs and superstitions, you came right out and said you didn't believe in God, quite simply. I've got to marry somebody who's seen through the bunk of this world,–"

"Did I say that?" said Anne. Why, Jerry used to be a minister,– she'd forgotten...

"Oh, I suppose you've forgotten. But you made me see that life's too short to bolster yourself up with Great Illusions. You made me see that people could face the Truth: could say 'I don't know.' We'd get on together, Anne, you know that!"

"But I don't love you. Not a bit." Anne smiled. If you laughed, you could keep from crying...

"You would if you'd only try it on!" Damn this tea table... Idiotic place to have begun this... There she was, pale, weary. Ready to, to,– The most beautiful person in all the world,– Anne...

"Try what on?" Anne looked at him. Long neck, Adam's-apple... His face red, freckled... Nose red, peeling... Red hands on the table's edge, with bony knuckles and yellow hairs that shone,– He tipped his chair down.

"Oh, Hell!" said Jerry...

...

A train, that buzzed on smoothly... Great plate-glass windows, tight shut... Chairs, covered with prickling green velvet... Not a breath of air in the whole, hurtling, hot thing... Outside the plate

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glass, houses, spinning past you. Houses made out of wood, with screened-in porches. Impermanent,– if a bomb fell, they'd,– Still, houses built for all time, didn't last,– Stone fell into cellars behind gaping windows... Stifling heat here. Windows that wouldn't open more than four inches. A country where none of the windows would really open... Country that didn't want to see the world except through glass...

"Why don't they have the windows made so you can lean out?" Anne asked. Josiah, in the next seat, held his paper aside, looked at her over his glasses.

"It would be dangerous," he said, "to lean out..."

...

The station at Downham. Entirely unchanged. Exactly as it had been. Stations were places with great holes blown in plaster, and roofs half fallen... Yet here was this small station, standing just as you had left it... Two centuries, almost, since you had left it... The station master, taking trunks off. After all these years, still shuffling up and down the platform not a day older... It should have been his son, now – or his grandson... Coming up with his hand out... Heavens... Anne wished people wouldn't see her... 'Well, well, well,' old Dennis pushing her hand up and down, 'ye'll be glad to be gittin' back. I expect ye had quite a time over there!'

"Yes, quite a time," Anne said...

...

"I'll walk up, dear," said Mrs. Wentworth, "and it will save a cab fare..." Anne ran after the small, black figure disappearing round the station. Saving cab fares... God... You used to pay huge bribes to make them take you... Queer not to know that next month someone would hand you piles more money... Money, that had nothing at all, in War, to do with living... Just given to you, to enjoy life, while it lasted.. So, you had come back, now, to saving cab fares... Lucky the Y. had paid that fifty dollars for the First Class... Elm trees, hanging heavy over the peaceful street. Lawns, baked in the heat of August. Ample, wooden houses. Geoffrey,– God... You used to walk along this very wall, here. But it was high then,– higher than your head,– a precipice. Mother used to reach her hand up when you got to the high place. High place, that reached only to your elbow. Beyond the houses, fields sloping to the river. The river, glimmering there, between its rushes. Wider than the Marne, that little river... Somewhere a cicada buzzing off into a long hiss...

The front path, leading between her mother's flowers. The smell of phlox and larkspur... Bees, buzzing... Hollyhocks against the green shutters of the front door... The old, square, white house, its small-paned windows,– a red cross in the dining room window,– Good God...

"What do you have that for?" said Anne, pointing.

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"To show that we've all joined the Red Cross,"– her mother's sweet voice...

"Let's take it down,–"

"Why?"

"Because,–" Stop,– mustn't tell Mother about prophylactic stations... There were Sarah and Maggie on the broad step. Kind faces, smiling, crying... Maggie and Sarah, still there, not a day older... Always been old... Always loved you... Have to kiss them...

The coolness of the hall... The smell of dried rose petals from the China bowl... The house smell... Hadn't thought of it, all this time,– yet here it was, dragging at you. Mother's gentle hands laying her quaint, black hat on the hall table. Why, yes,– you took your hat off,– You were going to stay here... Stairs, leading upward. The third step would creak when you stepped on it... God...

...

Morning. Anne opened her eyes. Her own room. White ruffled curtains moving in the soft breeze from the river. Pictures, above the desk, of girls in hockey costumes. Girl in the middle holding a silver cup in her hands, smiling. That girl had been you... Didn't have to get up, Mother had said that... Better get up, and see Josiah before he went to business... Josiah, who thought you must have hated Germans... Who, childlike, had swallowed all the British propaganda... Easier to stay here... In bed... She got up. The sea, somehow still rocking underneath you... Black, covering your eyes... She put her head down,– Mustn't get sick,– Oh, yes, you could get sick now... Home, now... No matter if one's eyes did go black... She reached the door and pulled it open. "Mother..."

...

Afternoon. Outside the open window, crickets singing. Anne lay, propped up in bed, watching her mother carry away the tea tray. How many trays her mother'd carried in these three days... Didn't mean to come home and be a bother like this... Nothing the matter, really... But if you got up, there was that queer blackness... And then, you might see people who thought they knew you... The person that they used to know was gone now. That was the trouble...

"Anne! By God, I'm glad to see you!" Randolph limped in, sat down, put his feet up against the bedside. "Homesick?" he said. Tears in Anne's eyes... She nodded.

"I don't know what for."

"I do. For France,– for Youth! There's a difference between Peace and War, Anne. Same difference as there is between a plate of soup and a bottle of champagne. Gosh! Wait till you've tried this peace stuff. Everything's over. If we were in a book, the thing would end here."

"Life doesn't do that. Besides, the thing that we went over there to do's not done yet."

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"But for us, there's nothing more to do about it. We've handed it over to the God damned politicians. All we have to do now is to decide what we are going to do next. God! It drives me wild when people ask me what I'm going to do next! Over there, you tossed your life to somebody, and he decided. Here it's all on you." Anne watched him. Uncle Caleb had offered him a job, her mother'd told her. To learn the business,– learn to be a partner... "Hell, Anne!" said Randolph. "I couldn't stick sitting in some beastly office. I want to paint. I've got my sketches,– I want to do more with them while I've still got the feel of the air,–"

"Why don't you?"

"Money. We forgot in France how life revolves round money. It's the last thing you think of when Death's grinning at you. Now there's not a day, not an hour, when money isn't the principal thing you think of,– Here I am, living on my in-laws. What I get from the Government, I have to send to Mother. Ros, on her back, completely worn out. Got to be taken care of on pillows till the child comes. And who's paying for it? Me? No. Your uncle. He never *tells* me he thinks I ought to begin earning a little something. He's awfully decent. And these doctors send him in bills for a thousand dollars. The surgeons want to hack my leg all up again, Anne, and fix it over. I reckon Mr. and Mrs. Huntington think I ought to let them." He sat, staring at the crease in the worn trousers that he'd had in college,– at least he wouldn't let them pay for new clothes... Another operation... Pain... Ether, in your throat... Pain, suffocating you, making you sick, making you a coward... Anne's big eyes, on you... She knew... She'd seen,–

"Don't," she said, quietly, "it isn't worth it."

...

Anne lay, watching her mother's profile against the open window. Her mother, reading... Sweet voice, that had read to you all through childhood and now you couldn't listen. The world that novels were about was such a dull one... Mrs. Wentworth laid the book down, looked up.

"Perhaps you'd rather read it to yourself, dear?" What was the matter? She used to feel Anne's eager mind when she was reading... Geoffrey was dreamy, but Anne had always listened and asked questions... Now she lay there, absent... Tears... Her face turning to the wall to hide them...

"I can't," said Anne. "Somehow, I've lost the habit."

...

Have to get up... To begin seeing people... People who thought they knew you,– but who didn't... She wouldn't see them,– 'But they're just the way they've always been,' her mother, gently.

"Yes, that's the trouble," Anne said...

...

Randolph. He came each afternoon, and put his feet up. Today he sat there, silent. Randolph's eyes, unhappy.

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"Christ, but I feel old!"

"You are old." Anne clasped her hands behind her head, eyes on the window. "We're all old."

"Twenty-three,—"

"Life's not measured by the times the earth goes round the sun. It's measured by what you live through,—"

"We've lived a hundred years, then,—"

"Lived through the whole history of the race," said Anne...

...

Have to get up. Have to begin life over... If only you could get up and go, it would be easy... If only you must pack your trunk, and find a taxi... Get on a train... Feel it jiggle under you and lay your head back,— 'Taisez vous, méfiez vous...' 'Il est dangereux de se pencher,—' But you belonged here. The place you'd longed to come to. The place you hadn't dared to think of, lest you weaken. And now,— If there were only a frontier somewhere that you could go to... Place to forget yourself in... Something to fight for... Some new world to conquer...

...

Up, at last. Anne crossed the street to mail a letter for her mother. Mother, giving her little things to do, so she would,— The minister's wife was waving, hurrying toward her. Turn, and run, quick,— Can't... One didn't do that... God, the woman looked just the same as ever... Not a day older. After all these years,— Anne wanted to cry. Silly... The woman, talking... "You must have had a great experience over there,— *What* will you do next?"

"God,—" Anne stopped herself. One didn't say that...

"Let me see," the woman chattered, "how long is it that you've been gone, Anne?"

"Twenty years," Anne said...

...

Uncle Caleb's avenue. Down, across the bridge, up through the beech woods... Gravel drive, winding... The great, stone house, with its red roof. Hydrangeas in fat tubs on the veranda. Same broad hall, with its mounted moose head. Same camellia trees in wooden tubs in the bow windows. Same heavy stairway. The shiny rail you used to slide on... Aunt Anna's plump, white hand, with its rings, now moving down it... Aunt Anna, hurrying to greet you. The shape of a great, solid pouter pigeon. As if she'd been made soft, and then poured into corsets... The old, regular, neat, artificial waves in her brown hair... Not changed at all, Aunt Anna... 'Anne! My dear child!' Aunt Anna's plump, soft cheek... 'What an experience you've had over there, haven't you? And what are you going to do now?' Anne swallowed. Great God, if they only wouldn't ask that...

...

Rosalind, lying in a huge, white bed. Rosalind, in pale blue, holding

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her arms out. A tall, fair girl uncurling herself from the sofa, coming toward Anne, shyly. Good Heavens, was that Ruthy? Ruthy and Sam had been just freckled, lumpy children when you went to this war... "Why, you're a grown-up lady!" Anne looked at her. Nice to find somebody who *had* changed...

"Sure." Ruth held a package of cigarettes out. "A pretty wicked one, too. I've just been getting bawled out." She glanced toward Aunt Anna.

"How do you mean, wicked?" Anne drew her feet up on the sofa, opposite Ruthy. Young, and with all her beauty still there... They didn't know what war was, these,–

"Oh, I've got a job," said Ruth. "I work for money."

"Ridiculous," said Aunt Anna, "she doesn't need to."

"I wear my skirts short. That's wicked. You wear yours short, too, Anne."

"Yes," said Anne, "in France the mud,–"

"I do it because it's the new style," said Ruthy.

"And when you sit down, your knees show," said Aunt Anna. "It isn't decent."

"Ma thinks the boys get a kick out of seeing our knees," Ruthy laughed. "I've asked Sam. He says he doesn't get one. He says you see too many,–"

"When I was a girl, we thought it proper to keep our legs,–"

"Yes, think of it! Pa used to get a kick out of seeing the girls' ankles!" Peals of laughter...

"Ruth!" stormed her mother. "It's really a serious matter, Anne," said Aunt Anna, "this letting down all our moral standards. This new evening dress Ruth's got now,– It has no sleeves,–"

"But it's quite proper round the neck, Anne." Ruth blew her smoke out. "Now if you'll look at that photograph of Mother when she came out, you'll see that her breasts,–"

"Ruth!" said Aunt Anna. She laid her knitting down. "We dressed decently in those days," she said. "We wore proper clothes underneath. Do you think it's decent, Anne, for girls to go round without corsets on, all sloppy and soft?"

"I'm not sloppy and soft." Ruth stood up, smoothing her flat, boyish figure. "Feel me, Anne. Hard, see? We keep our muscles trained down."

"But, Aunt Anna," Anne laughed,– they seemed so serious about this... "What's the harm in not wearing corsets if you're comfortable without them?"

"The harm?" Aunt Anna took her glasses off. She'd tell them... If Anne was coming home and going to champion Ruth in all this letting down of morals, she'd just tell them... "Supposing," she said, solemn, "supposing a young man should put his arm around you. Do you want him to,–" Ruthy, winking...

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"But, Aunt Anna, young men don't put their arms around me," Anne said...

...

Tea in the great library downstairs. Uncle Caleb, feet well apart, hands clasped behind him, his back to the fire. His neatly clipped beard parted down the middle. His hair, parted from his forehead down the back as far as his trig collar. English clothes, heavy, gold watch chain looped across the waistcoat. "Anne! Well!" He hugged her. Competent man, Uncle Caleb... His whiskers tickled. He held her at arm's length. "Well, you must have had quite a time overseas! And what are you going to do now?"

Randolph, standing tall and limp before the fire. Their eyes met. He, too,– Ah, he was coming to her rescue... 'How's the strike going, Sir?' Randolph, asking... Uncle Caleb's satisfaction melting... His eyes, tired... His nice hands, fiddling with the heavy watch chain...

"The employees won't give way an inch," he said. "But we can wait. They'll use up their war savings. Then they'll come back. If only the Government would get these radicals out of the way a little faster,– it's they who are responsible for all this unrest. Internationalism's in the air now,– and Wilson's partly responsible for that, too. Talking about the 'peoples of the world,'– saying we had no quarrel with the German people. Making entangling alliances and trying to drag us in." Anne's eyes met Randolph's. He was used to this... Amused by it... He'd given up saying anything...

"Infamous treaty!" said Uncle Caleb. "The Senate will never ratify it. Thank God we've got Lodge,–"

"But Uncle Caleb," said Anne, "don't you think the world has got to give up War?" Randolph, puffing his pipe, and smiling at her. Anne didn't know yet... But she'd find out, and it would hurt her...

"This treaty'll get us into more wars," said Uncle Caleb. "It binds us to guarantee the territorial integrity of Europe. No! We must keep out of Europe. Have a strong Navy, make 'em afraid to monkey with us." Anne got up and cut another piece of cake. Aunt Anna's plum cake, on its silver platter, the same as ever... Gosh. Aunt Anna pouring thick cream out of a silver pitcher... Better not listen to him... Better not argue... Mustn't let yourself feel so much like crying...

"How's Sammy?" Anne said. That would change the subject... Tously, pug-nosed, freckled little Sammy...

"He's got a lot of queer ideas in college," said Uncle Caleb. "Don't know what's going to become of the country, strikes everywhere, and young people acting the way they do,–"

"You don't trust 'em, Sir." Randolph puffed his pipe. "You trusted 'em to fight, why not,–"

"Trust Sam, with his wild ideas? He thinks the mill hands have what he calls 'the right to strike.' Thinks the police have got a 'right to strike.' There's some professor out there at the college,–

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some little Jew, that teaches them Bolshevism." Uncle Caleb shook his head. "There doesn't seem to be anybody but old men like me to bring the world back to where it was in 1914."

"But Uncle Caleb," said Anne, "we don't want the world where it was in 1914."

...

The avenue, down through the woods. Light coming through leaves, orange, and red and yellow. On the ground, leaves, lying like a colored carpet. Autumn... Randolph walked beside Anne, slowly, dragging his wounded leg along, in silence.

"What's all this racket about the younger generation?" she said. Randolph, smiling...

"The younger generation's supposed to be wild." He laughed.

"Wild? How?"

"Oh, they go on what they call 'petting parties,'" said Randolph. "They talk about 'em, right out. It drives your uncle crazy. He gives Sam money enough to buy a car to ride about in. That's just like sending him on 'petting parties,' really."

"They sent us to the war," Anne said.

"Yes, but we don't tell 'em about the war," said Randolph. "And Sammy does tell about the 'petting parties.' These kids don't keep things dark, that's all the difference. They're breaking the Victorian tradition,—"

"What does he mean by Sammy's 'wild ideas'?" Anne slowed down. Have to remember that Randolph couldn't walk fast...

"Socialism. Sam's got a passion, right now, for the working classes. Bad time for him to have it, when there's a strike on in his father's own mills. He's got a Russian friend that's taught him theories, 'standard of living of the working man,' and all that. He got into an argument the other night, and how your uncle did shout! He got going about how rotten Wilson and Lenin are. Sam's got some rather good ideas about this industrial unrest, but all he gets from his father is being told that he's a Bolshevik, and howled down. The truth is," Randolph's face grew serious, "the older generation has botched this world. They're just like great big, overgrown, unknowing children. They steered us into war, and that brought on all this industrial unrest. Now they're trying to pin all their mistakes on Wilson, and what they call 'Reds.' They're trying to drag us back to where we were in 1914. 'Back to normal' they say, and they persist in thinking that their age was 'normal.'"

"But what's this panic about the morals of the young?" said Anne, "the kids aren't wicked, are they?"

"That's just a symptom of the whole thing," said Randolph. "The younger outfit are beginning to see through them. They're making their own rules. They've seen their elders get us into war, by waving a flag of idealism before us, and tearing up the flag now that we've got

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home. They've seen 'em get rich running war industries, and raising prices, and now kicking like steers when the wage-earners strike for enough wages to buy their high-priced goods. They see 'em holding prices up, and then howling about the high cost of living. The mill owners thought we ought to go to war,– thought they ought to make B.V.D.'s for the brave soldier boys,– and now they don't think they ought to pay for it. They don't know enough history to know that in the end they'll have to. I reckon that these kids are seeing that their elders have been all wrong on the big issues, and that makes 'em have a hunch that they're wrong too, on the standards. Anyway, they've ditched the old rules. They're hunting about for new ones. They're experimenting,–"

"In morals?" Anne asked.

"In everything. They play hard,– but they work hard. And they get criticized for both things. There's Ruth, now. She's really working. She comes home tired, and all they do is tell her that working's foolish. And when she goes out in the evening, with young men, they fuss about her morals. Bah! Send the whole generation to war, and then fuss about a person's morals! It's amusing!"

"But is there anything really,– do they,–"

"Not Ruth," said Randolph. "It's all externals, with her. She came down the other night to go out,– looking like a million dollars, I thought. New dress, a touch of perfume, a bit of powder, a little lipstick. After she'd gone, your uncle went off into a regular tirade. Told me she looked just like a demi-mondaine,–" Anne threw her head back, laughing.

"Did you ask him how he knew what demi-mondaines looked like?"

"Hell," said Randolph. "Aren't I living on him?"

...

The stairs. And Maggie standing at the bottom of them, her face down against the newel post, and sobbing. Maggie in her 'going out' suit. Maggie who, with Sarah, seemed a part of Downham... Maggie, long ago, screeching at Anne and Geoffrey from the doorway... Maggie poking you when you took too much cream, on porridge... Maggie, a part of childhood... 'I'll work for ye's for nothing.' Maggie, mopping her eyes. 'No other lady'd ever be like,–' Sob... Sob...

"It isn't that, Maggie. It's food. It costs as much to feed one now as it did to feed two three years ago. I've explained it all to you, Maggie,–" Maggie raised her swollen face and tossed her head back.

"And how are ye's goin' to keep the house clean?" she said. "Who's goin' to dust thim stairs?" Anne thumped her shoulder.

"Come on, I'll dust 'em, Maggie..." Carrying the shabby bag, with string tied round it... Her mother, leading Maggie, sending a message to Mrs. Taylor by her... Anne and her mother standing on the sidewalk, waving, waving... The end of nearly thirty years of Maggie...

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"Does it really cost all that to live, Mother?" Anne turned toward her. Mother, walking slowly, bending to pull yellow leaves off the larkspurs... "It's just as if your father's salary had been cut in two," she said...

...

Anne walked furiously along a woodpath. Autumn... Sunlight coming through scarlet maples. American autumn, crisp, clear,– how you'd longed to feel it. And now,– Somehow, it didn't seem to matter... Nothing mattered... You ought to work... Ought to be doing something, going somewhere... If only you were being sent somewhere tomorrow... Taking a train from the Gare du Nord in early morning... To work with your hands... To cook and scrub... Feed people... That was easy... Easy... Everyone expecting you to do something... 'And what are you going to do next?' Damn them... How did you know? Mother didn't ask you... 'Rest a bit,' she said... Rest,– Rest was the last thing that you wanted... Anne turned toward the hill, and clambered up it... Activity... The only thing that would keep you from,– Steady... What you wanted was Adventure ... Something greater than yourself to work for... Something to take a risk for... Something to throw yourself away in... Anne groaned. Her father, tired, growing old. His income, cut in two. She'd go in town, and try to get a job tomorrow... What kind of job? God... She threw herself down, face downward on the hilltop. To work for what? Money? Money wasn't worth it. For an ideal... But ideals had been scrapped. Nothing left. You fought to make the world safe... Now it was safe. Safety... Oh, God...

...

A business office. Electricity, blaring from the ceiling. Anne sat on a bench and waited. Ellery T. Perkins. She stared at the looking-glass letters on the glass door. The man had told Josiah he didn't see why women couldn't sell insurance. How could she sell insurance? A girl, at a telephone desk by the door, well dressed, competent, long, white fingers playing with the wires. 'Miss Wentworth, to see Mr. Perkins,' she said.

Anne shivered. Hands wet, cold... Cold as ice... Perhaps he'd be out... She hoped to God he'd be out... Perhaps he wouldn't have a job... Hoped to,– If he didn't, she wouldn't sit in this closed-up place, at one of those desks, under an electric light while sun shone outside... While the wind,– God, Life must have fresh air, and movement in it,– you mustn't get tied to jobs that kept you indoors... Like that girl at the telephone, hitched by a wire... Girl looking at her, sorry for her, scornful... The telephone girl watched the glass door close behind Anne. She turned to the bell-boy.

"One of the Unemployed," she said, with a smile...

...

Sunshine, warming your shoulder blades... Anne lay on the sloping

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bit of grass that led down to the river. She had come home, eaten lunch, said nothing. Thank God, her mother hadn't asked her... Now she lay there. Life, hanging above you, like a sword, suspended...

"Get a job?" Randolph stepped out the long door of Josiah's study, stretched himself painfully on the grass beside Anne.

"No," she said. "Thank God."

"Whereas," he said, "I've got one danglin' before my nose, and I won't take it. Everyone saying I'm a rotter to go on living on Mr. Huntington like this, and doing nothing. God, Anne, I don't want to get started going into business! He wants me to help him 'whip his employees into shape' as he says. Hell, I don't want to help anyone to whip employees,–"

"It isn't that," said Anne, "it's losing freedom. To sit in an office every day from nine to five,– miss all the sunshine. No more exercise, no excitement, no more fresh air. Know just what you'll be doing the next day, and the next one and the next one. Next month, next year. Sit there till you get old. Till you've lost the longing for the wind and sunshine. Imagine doing that all your life, like Father! If the world's going to be like that,– thank God, we've had War!"

"Whew!" said Randolph. "What wouldn't I give to feel a plane under me! To taxi across a field, and feel her jiggle, and lift her, and feel her zooming up, up. Bouncing a little when you go across a current... Life'll never have any thrills in it any more, that's sure."

"The thing is," said Anne, "to know which of the safe things to do next."

"If only I could get a studio," said Randolph, "show 'em the way this puny world looks from up there... Breathless patches of purple through the white clouds... Sun, shining on a white mist, and the world gone. Edges of clouds at sunset. I'd like to make 'em see what fighting in the sky's like, the beauty, and the terror. And then when I've got that done, I want to get out of this. Move somewhere, sail out into something,– Some place where there's danger."

"If there were a frontier," said Anne. "But there isn't. From what I gathered in the army, the West is trying to turn itself into a copy of New York. And New York, after all, is only a main street grown huge. That's why the smartest of the small-town people can go there and make themselves feel smarter. A small-town person's paradise, New York. And look what rubes they were when they hit Paris,–"

Randolph sat up, his long arm round his knee. "I suppose I'll sit and fume a few months," he said, "and then I'll take this damn job." Scowling... Looking at the river...

"Oh, don't!" Anne said...

...

A magazine office. One of those heavy, slippery magazines that

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showed you how to furnish your new house,– your 'home' they called it. As if home consisted in early Italian chairs... Anne sat on a carved chair, feet on linoleum, black and grey squares made to look like marble. The chair squeaked when you wiggled. Stenographers walked past, coming from their lunch. They looked at Anne's college tweed suit, woolen stockings, low-heeled, broad shoes. The stenographers wore new fur coats and slippers. The employment manager wore a dress of satin, a pearl necklace. Her hair methodically waved... Eyes that looked at you, took your clothes in... 'You've had experience?' she said.

"Of a sort," said Anne. The choky feeling in your throat... Darn your throat... "I've been in France,–"

"Ah, yes? I'm afraid, Miss Wentworth, there isn't any place for people without experience right now. We're cutting down our staff, not building it up. The advertisers..." The elevator sunk away from the carved chairs, the rugs. Anne clutched its side. Thank God, she wouldn't have to work here... Yet, one could not do nothing... Tears, damn them... Hold on... Something would break,–

...

'Extra!' Boys shouting in the street, outside, holding up papers. 'Wilson col*laps*es!' Hoarse voices, joyful at the big news... Anne put two pennies in a dirty first. 'Pueblo, Col. Sept. 26,' the thing read, 'President Wilson was forced to give up his speaking tour in favor of the League of Nations today, when...' She let the paper fall to her side. Must cross this street... If he should die, everything would be lost... The whole two years,– but no, it couldn't... He'd get well... And if he didn't, his ideas would,– The country must,– 'Look out, you'll be run over. That truck,–' A woman seized her. She jerked her arm free, ran among the traffic.

"Oh, Hell!" she said...

...

A letter on the hall table by the door. Jerry's regular, neat writing... She knew what it would say. 'Settle down... have children... That's all there is left after you've tried everything else...' How *did* people settle down? How could women bear it, sitting at home and being the center of a tiny world that revolved inside four walls?

"Come and have some tea, dear," called her mother. Anne, tired... Troubled over Jerry's letter... 'Yes,' she muttered...

Randolph came in. Randolph's eyes,– Heavens, what had happened? Disgust... Terror... He limped up and down, hand pushing his hair back. "It's been going on all day," he said. "Why these damned doctors can't think up some better way of,–" Anne looked toward her mother. The pale face nodded. Rosalind... Up there in the big house, having her baby... Randolph, bumping the chairs. Her mother patting his shoulder as she went past him to get more hot water.

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"Is it,– bad?" Anne asked. What did one say to husbands?

"It's Hell!" he said. "It's like War. Worse. Like dying in a hospital. You can't die quick enough. You can't get born quick enough. What's the use of trying to stop War, Anne, while this business goes on? The only thing to do's to stop the whole race. The whole race is too God damned near being beasts, that's what's the matter. If we were just Souls,–"

"Some tea?" said Anne. "Mother's getting,–"

"Hell, no!" Randolph tipped over a branch of scarlet maple. The bronze vase rolled at his feet, strewing the water. He didn't see it. "I've got to go back," he said. "I go wild when I stay there. I know what pain's like! Stop the whole race, that's the only way to stop pain. While men live, they'll fight, and they'll love. And women,– Christ! I've got to go back. They told me to get out. I can't stay out... I wouldn't have married her, Anne," Randolph's lips trembling, "if I'd thought I'd kill her..."

Anne watched him, limping through the growing dusk toward the roadway. The crickets, chirping...

...

Breakfast. Josiah, hurrying a little, as he'd been hurrying for fifty years now. His train... Hated this eating without Maggie there to bring the things in... Hated to leave his wife to wash the dishes... The world was no longer a very pleasant place to live in,– If these damned Democrats would only get out,–

"It's queer they haven't telephoned about Rosalind," said Mrs. Wentworth. "It must be over..." Anne, eating. Couldn't swallow. She might be dead... Rosalind, dead... Women did that... Love,– The front door, opening... Good God... Ruthy, bounding in, breathless, her cheeks scarlet. It was all right... Anne took a bite of bacon.

"I've got a niece!" said Ruthy.

"And Rosalind?"

"They say she's all right. Gosh, Anne, if that's what having children's like, I don't want any!"

"And what are they going to name her?" said Josiah, rising.

"They're going to call her 'Amélie,'" said Ruthy. Halfway to her mouth, Anne's fork stopped. The bacon fell to her plate. She laid the fork down, slowly.

"Are they? After whom?" her mother, asking...

"Why, after France," said Ruthy. "It seems that Amélie's sort of a favorite name of Randolph's." Anne picked up her piece of bacon.

"Well, that's a pretty name," said Mrs. Wentworth...

...

Anne's teeth all aching. Pleasant, really, to be able to pin the aches down... She sat in the dentist's chair. His little wire poking, poking, hurting... Hurting every time he,– her teeth had used to be strong,

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nothing ever used to be the matter... He stood back, looking. "Hair coming out?" he asked her.

"In handfuls." How did he know it? Heavens...

"Symptom of severe nervous strain." He raised his instrument to go on. "Sometimes when people go insane, their hair and teeth,–" He stopped. Tears in this girl's eyes... Why, she used to be calm, and scientifically minded... Where had they sent women, over there, that they could get so worn out? "Better go easy for a while," he said. "That hurt?" Anne blinked.

"Everything seems to hurt now..."

...

She stood on the dentist's steps. Damn this broad street with its comfortable, unmolested houses,– Comfort, entrenched,– untouched... Where to go next? Have to work for something,– if you didn't, things would crack inside you... Cousin Susan Emerson, dressed like Queen Alexandra, coming,– toward her. God, if you could only turn and run from people... If you could scream,– you couldn't. You had to grin, be pleasant.

"Anne! My dear child! So you're back! And what have you been doing over there all this time? Amusing the army?"

"Trying to." Anne bit her lower lip. Nothing to cry for... This old woman couldn't,–

"Well, all I can say is," Cousin Susan, emphatic, "your cousin Thomas was at the Civil War for three years. *He* didn't need young girls to go down there and amuse *him*,–"

"Didn't he?" Anne said.

...

The College Gates. Opposite them, strange barracks, sprawling on the Common. Girls, turning in at the gates, books under their arms. Girls, sitting on the grass. Strange girls, calling to one another, laughing. A thousand years ago they used to call *you* when you walked past... You, too, used to sit there, hatless, in the sunshine... The old woman in the College Office must be dead now... No, here she was,– not a day older. Still answering, peevish, when students asked her questions... Looking up, squinting at you, wondering,– Ah, she, at least, knew you... 'Miss Wentworth! So glad to see you back. What an interesting... And what,–'

"Could I see the Dean?" Anne asked...

...

The Dean, tall, slender, grey hair matching her grey dress, standing before an open fire. Blue eyes, that looked,– God, would she tell you you'd had an interesting,– "We're glad to have you back," she said. "Sit down, here, by the fire." She drew her own chair up, across the fire, "We want to consider what there is for you to do. The world needs people who've been through what you've been..."

Suddenly Anne talked about the war. This woman was listening...

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This woman knew that she didn't know what War was like,– she was trying to find out... It was the first time you had talked to anyone about the war, this... The Dean's eyes on your face...

"The one thing that I know about the war," she said, looking at the fire, "is that we, who stayed over here, know nothing. We don't understand it. I sometimes think that we don't want to understand it. We had a vision,– a very noble vision,– of the achievement of a great ideal. We liked to think our means to realize our great end were also noble. Right now, we see our ideal, tottering. We're afraid to see the nobility of the whole process go, too. After a year or two, we'll face the whole thing. When everybody sees what you, who have been over there, see,– they'll try to make a different sort of world to live in. In the meantime, the people who care about the Truth, have something to hold onto,–" Anne nodded. Tears in her eyes... Fool... 'There are no jobs now,' she said.

"I know." The Dean walked toward the window, hands clasped behind her. Better not look at this girl... She didn't want you to see that she was broken... What she needed was an Ideal to work for... The habit of heroism wouldn't die without a struggle...

"Why don't you take the Gordon Fellowship, Miss Wentworth? The girl who had it has just been married,– doesn't want it. You could do research on history and international politics,– give yourself time to decide what sort of job you really do want. In the next presidential campaign, I believe we're going to decide the question as to whether this country is to coöperate intelligently in international affairs, or not. The country will soon need people who know something of international polity. It seems to me that the few people who really did fight for the Ideal this past few years, should go on,– not stop. Then, when the campaign's over, you'll know what you really want to work at..." Anne stood up. Couldn't speak. Things in your throat all swollen... Tears, dripping down, sticking in the rough tweed of your jacket. The Dean, not seeing, holding her hand out, leading you toward the door, patting your shoulder. "Don't answer right now. Think about it a while. Let me know..." The door, shutting. Great God, get out before these strange young creatures saw you crying...

...

"I've got a chance. Now that I've got it, I don't seem to have pep enough to take it," Anne, blinking tears back... "Got to decide tomorrow." She gazed across the tea tray to the fire. Randolph sat, slumped down in Josiah's worn old armchair, his feet up on the fender.

"Trouble with us is," he said, "we've lost all our power of deciding. Been kicked round too long. Why, a woman asked me if I'd give a lecture,– down here at the church,– tell 'em what I did in the Great War. I can't even decide that,–" Anne looked at him. She laughed.

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"You'd better not do that!" she said...

...

Breakfast. So this was the way you felt when you had only slept two hours. You used to sleep through air raids... But you never had to decide anything in those days... Have to decide today... Have to decide... Couldn't... Her mother, saying that the college year had gone so far, that it would be too hard work for her to catch up... Saying she looked tired... Getting up to answer the doorbell, thank God... 'A telegram for you, dear.' Jerry. It was from Jerry. He'd be there that day about four o'clock to see her. Didn't want to see him... Didn't want to... God, if he put his arms out, you might fall in,— Don't give your life up just because you're tired... Your head, buzzy... "I'll have some more coffee, Mother," Anne said.

...

The College Library. Strange girls at the tables. Anne went to the alcove where the international law books were. Try what it would be like... She took a book down, sat down at the table. Would her brain work? After years of atrophy... An undergraduate, with short, curly hair, across the table, looking at her. She turned the book's leaves. 'The Rules of Civilized Warfare...' God! Were they crazy? A hospital, in June... Men, on the floor, on stretchers... Men blinded, catching your shoulders, their fingers hurting... Men coughing their lungs up, spitting into glass bowls... Civilized warfare,— Anne closed the book up. She took the paper-covered catalogue from her pocket. 'French 20 b. Histoire de la Civilisation... Lectures on the rise and fall of the civilizations of the West, with especial study into the reasons for the decline of civilizations...' The undergraduate looked up. Queer, pale girl opposite, fingering the catalogue, letting it drop, gazing out the window... Tears in her eyes... Old... Getting up suddenly, bolting toward the doorway... Graduate student prob'ly ... Quite apt to be nuts, those graduate students...

...

Anne walked down by the river. Got to decide... Couldn't... Last day to tell the Dean... Good God, how could you? A University crew, rowing past, strong, muscles clinching, bare backs swinging, swinging. 'One, two! One, two!' Men's backs with holes shot through them... Red meat coming out and hanging... Silver instruments that probed the red meat... The smell of ether... Doctors... Nurses... God... She stopped. The something that was going to crack all this time, was cracking. Tears, trickling, round drops in the fuzz of your old jacket. Your chest wobbling... If only somebody would tell you what you must do... Doctors... Somebody would have to... Old Major Carey, of the hospital at Bordeaux... Go tell him... He,— he had been through,— He knew,— An electric car, stopping, Anne got on. Move... Keep moving... Keep from crying that way... A

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telephone booth. A nickel, tingling. Doctor Carey's voice. Miss Wentworth! Of course, he remembered... Yes... 'Come right off,' he was saying... 'Right off...' How did he know?

The subway rattling under her. Knees shaking. No reason for her knees to tremble like this... Subway moving toward,– So she was going to give her soul up. To lay it bare before this kind old doctor... A soul could be wounded, battered... Once you'd given it up, could you get it back, though? Could anyone else mend it? Your stop... Have to get up... Couldn't... Have to stand by the door, there... If you didn't move, the thing would take you past it. Must move... Couldn't. Must... God... She got up. Her hand trembled on the white enamel post beside the doorway. She gripped it. Have to let go of the post... Could you? Was your hand,– Knees trembling... 'Coward,' she muttered, 'Coward...'

...

The street. That street of pleasant, unmolested dwellings. Doctors' offices,– their names on brass plates. Doctor Carey's number 16... Anne's feet dragged. Number 26... Slower... Number 18... Feet dragging... God... His name in gold letters on a black sign. Once he'd been a Major,– now just an M.D. Thank God, the steps were high, would take a long while. All the way up those steps her soul would be hers... Hand on the brownstone balustrade, dragging herself up. What should she say? How should she begin giving her soul up? Your soul,– much more secret than your body... Black and white marble on the porch floor. There was the bell. Put your hand out... Touch it... Once you had rung the bell, your soul was,– Hand, going toward it, limply...

She stopped. The hand clenching, diving to her pocket. This thing might mean two years of sagging... Limping... Sanitariums... Two years of being pitied... Spilling your soul... She turned round. Soul, still her own,– thank God. Unspilled. Take it away, quickly... Run with it,– down the steps,– down the street... Run. Quick, quick... Strength in your legs now. Faster... Faster, lest you should turn back... Run! Cold air, pumping in and out of your lungs... Muscles working... Warmth, coming up, inside. Your own warmth... She stopped, panting. Unclenched the tight fists, rammed them in her pockets. Clenched them again. Hold onto what you've got... She walked on. "Gee!" she said... "Gee..."

...

She dropped a nickel into the telephone at a drug store. The Doctor's number. 'Yes?' she heard his kind voice. Her voice stuck. She gulped, swallowed. 'I'm not coming. I'm all right,' she said. 'Good!' she heard him shouting...

...

Cling... Another nickel. Cling, cling... The College number. 'The Dean's office.' 'Yes, Miss Wentworth?' The Dean's voice, clear, wait-

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ing... "I've decided to take the fellowship," Anne said. "Be out tomorrow..."

"Good!" the Dean said...

...

A barber shop. Long, long ago she used to come here with Geoffrey and her mother. Used to envy Geoffrey, when he sat, wrapped in a white sheet, 'like a big boy' in the tall chair and had his hair cut... Men, lying back in chairs. A little Italian barber, rubbing his hands and coming forward! 'Madam must have come in the wrong door.' It was before the day of bobbed hair.

"I've come to get my hair cut off," said Anne...

...

She watched it, falling. Soft, brown stuff, that you had handled until it had almost come to be part of you. A part of life... Parts of life could be cut off, forgotten... Parts that were dying, hurting... Without them, you began new. Nuns cut their hair off...

Snip, snip. The thrilling prick of little pieces down the nape of your neck. 'There!' The barber whirled the chair round, stood looking, scissors in air. Opposite Anne, a boy, wrapped in a white sheet... A bang across his forehead... Light, that caught in the bang and shone there... Under it, serious, big eyes. A solemn boy, with little snips of brown hair stuck on the sheet. Hair that had once been Anne's hair... She shook her head,– the boy smiled. Head that felt light, free... Nothing to pull and hurt you... She ran her hand up, gently, from the nape of her new neck. Delicious prickles, tickling your scalp, your fingers... She tossed her head back,– the boy laughed at her from the mirror... 'Ah, ah! You like it?' The barber unpinned the white sheet. She slipped down, stood, turning her new head.

"Yes," she said, "it makes you feel young!"

...

The train, stopping. Anne jumped down from the steps. Darkness, cold air. The bright stars, shining through bare branches of the elm trees. Other suns, other universes out there... Enormous Space... Silly to get too worked up over this one, small planet... The west wind, blowing. She took her hat off. Wind, catching your hair, and giving it gentle tugs the way it used to, long ago when you were little. The tired place above your neck was cool now. Something to do... Something to do tomorrow,– Thank God! You'd have to get up early... Have to work hard, to make up those three weeks... The gate. The path. Long breaths of cold air... Life,– good...

The parlor. Her mother, sewing. Firelight flickering from the backs of books along the wall. Soft lamplight filling the pleasant, worn room. Somebody there... Somebody getting up from Josiah's armchair. An awkward, tall man, turning. Glasses,– Jerry... She had forgotten Jerry. "Oh, hello," she walked forward with her hand out...

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Jerry watched her sit down on the low stool before the fire, legs crossed before her. Mrs. Wentworth had been saying she was worn out. She didn't look worn out... Cheeks, glowing... Grey eyes, shining... Pulling her gloves off. Taking her hat,– Good God... What had she done now? Looked like a small boy somehow... Something had happened to her... Mrs. Wentworth leaning forward, pulling her glasses down, looking over their gold rims at her daughter. 'Why Anne! You've cut your hair off!' That was it... He could see now. Shorn away all the woman in her at one stroke... She wouldn't marry him now...

"Great guns!" said Jerry.

"Well," Anne laughed. "How do you like it?" *Her* hair... *Her* life... Not his... Jerry watched her. Like to touch that soft hair where the light shone across her forehead... Couldn't... Not yet... Her mother, leaning forward, thin hands stroking the smooth hair. 'I think it's very pretty,' she was saying...

"Well, Jerry, how's the world with you?" Anne tossed the question. It didn't matter... In peace-times nothing but Oneself mattered, and One's Own Things...

"I've got a chance to go to South America," said Jerry. "I,– I'm going to start next week,–" Jerry got up, walked up and down the rug, "I'm getting restless. Can't stand this going to an office. Every day, just like the last one. Want to get out, get moving." He stood, looking at Anne. She, too, was restless... You could see it in her eyes,– in her face... "I'm going next week," he said. Would she come? Would she? His eyes, gleaming through the heavy glasses... Asking, asking...

"Good!" she said. "I've found myself a job, too. I'm starting on the Gordon Fellowship tomorrow." She sent smoke into the air, and watched it, spreading. Blew a bit of tobacco from between her lips. Jerry watched her. Idiot to have thought she'd go with,– She stood up.

"Well, I better go get dressed for dinner," she said...

...

The train, the subway, college... The Library... Books, like dreams... Lectures, like people talking in their sleep... Snug little world that didn't know there'd been war... Anne's brain, like some old bear, stretching itself and waking. The subway, the train, home... Anne moved mechanically. Day, after day, this...

...

The Armistice Ball. Anne moved among the people in the cloakroom. Why had she let Rosalind kid her into coming here with Randolph? Aunt Anna was a patroness. Aunt Anna had insisted that they should all go. Dowagers, turning looks of disapproval on her short hair... Scanning her straight, soft dress of moss-green velvet, with its short skirts... They'd be more shocked, if they knew you got

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it in Paris with money that the Y.M.C.A. had paid you,– Débutantes, in fluffy dresses, talking, laughing. Girls who had been her own age, grown stout and matronly, standing, waiting for their husbands. Their hair in neat waves, dresses cut low in front after the old style. Pieces of lace across the crack between,– And they thought themselves modest... Were shocked at your firm legs... Anne stroked the soft green velvet that lay so smooth and flat across her straight chest.

"Anne!" Ruthy dashed in, excited, wrapped in white fur. "Tell me, have I got too much powder? Ma made *such* a racket." Anne followed her tall, white cousin toward the mirrors,– an excuse to leave those girls her own age. Sad, to see them suddenly turned to matrons... "Girls, doesn't Anne's hair look lovely? Shan't we cut ours?" Ruthy, talking, tossing her white coat off, pulling up her tulle skirts, rolling her stockings... "Ma *made* me wear my corsets. But in the automobile I took 'em off." Screams from the débutantes. Manicured fingers pointing to a white door: 'We've put ours in that closet.'

A ballroom, filled with people, filled with jazz music. Young men, the neat, black shoulders of their dress coats jiggling in a strange way. Shoulders that moved and swayed like that ought to be naked, dark brown, in a jungle. A row of dowagers standing with broad, bare bosoms, jewelled tiaras, skirts that swept the floor behind them. Smiling, bowing, returning your bow. Above their heads,– CANTIGNY ... Anne closed her eyes. God, why had they put that there? A great white satin banner with gold letters. Cantigny... Geoffrey... A field, next to a wall, with crosses,– 'Come on!' Randolph touched her elbow, steered her. 'Let's sit where we can't see that.' They sat on gilt chairs. People passing, smiling... Floating dresses... Bare necks, bare arms... BELLEAU WOOD... God, there was another,– above it a row of ladies with fat, bare arms, looking down to find their daughters, bowing, smiling. CHATEAU-THIERRY... Anne's eyes closed. Stretchers on a floor as big as this floor... The smell of ether... Blood, trickling in a black stream across the asphalt... Men, groaning, crying, tossing themselves about the bed, the sheets all,– 'This music makes me nervous.' Randolph, next her...

"Let's go over there," said Anne, "we could see better." They edged round the dancers. SOISSONS. THE ARGONNE. Ruthy, whirling past you, smiling, waving. CANTIGNY...

"Great God!" said Randolph. "Let's get somewhere where we can't see!"

...

"Will you dance, Anne?" Sammy, standing before her, holding his arms out, laughing. Looking tall and grown-up in his dress suit. 'Sure!' What was it they were dancing? Something new, and shaking, after the fashion of the jungle. Sammy stepped on her toes,–

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'Gee, I'm sorry. Say, I like your dress, Anne.' Queer not to be dancing waltzes, after the style of Main Street... Not to hear a whistle, and to feel men's hands seize you... Sammy whirling, dipping. There, she was getting onto this now... Young men, smiling at young girls, jiggling backward, forward... CHATEAU-THIERRY... Little girls, who knew nothing, laughing, talking, dancing... BELLEAU WOOD... Married women dancing, smiling at their husbands, at other people's husbands,– knowing even less than young girls... If they knew, they,– SOISSONS... Ruthy, her long white arm round a man's shoulder... THE ARGONNE... Aunt Anna, fat bosom, jewels, smiling from a box at the young people,– Shut your eyes before you saw CAN-tigny... 'Having a good time?' said Sammy.

"Oh, swell!" Anne said...

...

Anne slumped down in the seat of Rosalind's runabout next Randolph. Wrapped in her mother's ancient sealskin,– its shoulders worn where the sleigh used to rub it. Well, anyway the dress underneath had come from Paris,– in another two years all these people would be wearing,– How they'd stared at it... Or was it her hair, her legs,–

"If I'd been decorating that hall I'd have emblazoned it with 'CASINO DE PARIS,' 'FOLIES BERGÈRE,' 'THE CRILLON BAR,' 'CIRO'S.' Why not remind people of something pleasant?" Randolph stepped on the throttle.

"These old ladies don't know there were things 'pleasant,'" said Anne. "The names of battles remind them of the Glory."

"To Hell with Glory! If these good ladies could see Ciro's at tea time with all the tarts, and all their brave, young heroes,– they wouldn't let old Lodge go on wrangling in the Senate about the Treaty. They'd *make* him let it go through."

"It's got to go through, anyway," said Anne. "We bullied the others into the League of Nations. We can't go back on them. Americans aren't quitters,–"

"I don't know. Lodge is jealous at not having gone to Paris." Randolph smiled, "I reckon old Lodge knows Paris,–"

"It's a queer mentality among the older generation," said Anne. "Send you to war and then be shocked at the way these kids dance,–"

"Yeah, I know. Your uncle and a couple of other old birds spent half the evening tellin' me how wicked the young folks are, and the other half tellin' me what a fine feller Lodge is. Hell, Anne, why should we care what *they* think? They sent us out to fight a war,– to wallow through the boredom and the immorality and the hard work. And now that we've got back, they're letting us down."

"Not yet," said Anne. "Wilson says he'll send the Treaty to the country. The country surely will come out right!"

"I'm not so sure!" said Randolph. "This country's got just one

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idea now, and that's to get rich." Silence. Trees going past, whish, whish...

"Well, anyway, we've seen Life," said Anne. "We've no illusions. We don't believe in God, or Heaven, or the Righteousness of War, or the morality of men. There's a certain satisfaction in seeing things as they are."

"Yes." Randolph slowed down for the corner of the Downham Court House. "Why Anne, they don't know what a good time is, these young kids! Parties like this one tonight! I reckon you have to be dithering on the edge of Death to know what Life is. We had a damn good time, Anne!"

"Yes," said Anne. "We had a damn good time!"

...

Anne stood outside a lunch place waiting for Sammy. He wanted her to meet his friend, Petrovitch. Bare elm twigs arching over the old street. Along the dusty sidewalks students walking. Sam, coming, bending forward, eager, listening to a short man with a shock of black hair. Sam waving to her. The short man, looking up,– foreign eyes that saw you first as Woman... 'Comrade Petrovitch,' Sam said... Colonial floor boards, creaking. Sam, pulling chairs out! 'Well, they've defeated your rotten treaty at last, Anne!' Sam, triumphant...

"No!" She stood, holding the chair's back. So, It was all for nothing... Silly to be upset, you'd known this would happen,– Two years, thrown,– Lives, on the Scrap Heap,–

"Sit down. Yes, it was rejected today in the Senate. They say old Wilson's going to pigeonhole it. Pa'll be pleased,– that's the one subject Pa and I agree on."

Anne slumped to her seat: "So the whole war was useless!"

"And are not all wars useless?" Petrovitch ran his fingers through his black hair. "Surely, Miss Wentworth, you did not want us to join a peace of conquest? To trample on our enemy? To join a league of imperialist states,–"

"I believe the League of Nations is a start in the right direction," said Anne, "if everyone got in and tried to make it work, it would work."

"Ah, you deceive yourself, Miss Wentworth!" The Russian's keen eyes on her... "Capitalist governments will never make the world safe. Never shall we have internationalism till we have Labor controlling the great states."

"Say, Anne," Sammy broke in, "why doesn't your noble League of Nations stop France from egging the Poles on? The Poles are fighting an aggressive war right now, under French officers,–"

"Yes," said Petrovitch. "Your classmate, little what-you-call-him, who went to join the Polish army,– he went to Saint-Cyr,–"

"And why do you suppose there's all this hysteria about the

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alleged Reds?" said Sam. "It's because your Capitalist outfit know that in the end the Socialists'll do what they can't. The Capitalists may haul the world back into a semblance of prosperity for a couple of hundred years. After that, it'll crack. Labor will see that it's got nothing to lose and everything to gain by,—"

"Sam," said Petrovitch, "a strange man has come today to my rooms to ask for me. Olga has told him,—" Anne watched Sam. A faint flush mounting among his freckles... So there was a girl... "She has told him that I was out. He said he would come back."

"I wonder who the Hell he was?" said Sammy...

...

"Well, did you meet Sam's fighting pacifist?" said Randolph. Anne sat in the library at the big house. Rosalind, downstairs now, pouring tea...

"Look out! I'm going to be a pacifist myself in the next war," said Anne. "Remember that man Lewis Newman, who used to come out here? He always told me we were foolish to go to this war,—"

"Yes, but the trouble with him was," Randolph packed tobacco in his pipe's bowl, lit it, "he was physically yellow. Remember the time you tipped him over in the canoe? He swam ashore as fast as possible and left you to get the boat off the log? You never could be quite sure whether his pacifism was from fear or from conviction. It was unfortunate that at the beginning of the war most of the pacifists happened to be people who were yellow,—"

"Perhaps they weren't. Perhaps we couldn't judge right. War's like Love,— a sort of hysteria that makes you see crooked,—" She stopped. Uncle Caleb came in. He patted Rosalind. 'Sweet thing! Sweet thing!' Randolph rising,— his leg hurting... Outside, the roar of Sammy's car. Sammy walked in, flushed. 'It's a damned outrage. It's,—'

"What's a damned outrage?" Uncle Caleb stood on the hearth rug, his feet well braced, hands firmly clasped behind him. Purple veins standing out along his temples...

"Department of Justice man, came and took Petrovitch. Sent him to New York. Going to deport him. God! This country's rotten!" Sammy, pacing up and down the big room...

"Rotten? And why?" Uncle Caleb, shouting. "Because a lot of dirty foreigners come here and incite the working people. Look at this country today: Coal Strike, Steel Strike, Milk Strike, Pressmen's Strike,— a hundred others. It's Bolshevism! They say they're going to form an Anarchist Federation here, and that the Soviet's going to tell American workers not to vote in the election, but seize the government by force,—"

"Well, it's not true," said Sammy, "and if it were true, you couldn't really blame 'em. The Capitalist Government hauled them into a war to set up an international system. It hasn't done it. And now

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the Capitalists have stopped production by holding up the prices,–'

"Do you mean,–" Uncle Caleb, roaring... Sammy stood, looking at him. Why the Hell did the older generation always have to bellow... The Governor wouldn't help Petrovitch, that was a cinch...

"Come on. Walk home with me," Anne said to Sammy...

...

"Talk about Freedom!" Sammy rammed his hands down in his pockets, striding fiercely. "We haven't got any freedom in this country, never have had. Our damned ancestors came over here to find a place where they could be just as narrow-minded as they wanted,–"

"Tell me about Petrovitch," said Anne. "He has a sister?" She watched him,– boys didn't grow passionate over abstract freedom...

"Yes. Olga. I'll show them," he said fiercely. "I'll go live with her myself and take care of her. If this damned Government is going to,–"

"You love her?" Sammy nodded, scuffing in the dead leaves. How did Anne know? They walked in silence. Beyond bare twigs, the river, winding dark among tan-colored rushes. A duck rose suddenly, and flew off. "Why don't you marry her?" said Anne.

"She doesn't believe in marriage. Believes in Love, holding people together,–"

"Oh, I see," Anne paused. "Your family,–"

"I don't care a damn about their bourgeois morals!" Sam's chin, prodding the air. "Their ethics are all based on mediæval taboos. Father's always telling me things are right and wrong because 'gentlemen don't do it,'– that's his idea. And Mother believes all this tripe they used to pull at school about religion. That Jesus was a half-God, sent down to tell us what's what,– all that. You had to believe a thing they called the Virgin Birth at school, or you weren't properly a Christian. Now that stuff's bunk, Anne. You know it. One man's guess is as good as another's on God, but if he does exist, he never stooped to any of that Leda and Swan stuff. And if they give you a lot of bunk as truth, how are you going to know their standards of morality aren't bunk, too? They tell you to do a thing because Jesus was a half-God, and he said so. Well, he isn't a half-God, so what does it matter?"

"Suppose you think of him as a bright young Hebrew, like your friend Petrovitch," said Anne. "It isn't so much that things are true because he said them, as that he said them because they were true. It's the humanity in Christianity that makes it worth while."

"Funny, the rector's a good scout, too." Sammy, scowling. "Yet he pretends to swallow all that stuff."

"Well, you see, older people have been brought up to act in a certain way because they, or their ancestors, believed a certain set of ideas. It's a pretty good way to act, and they find it easier to go on holding

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onto the same ideas,– even if they're not true. It's just like Daylight Saving: We all know it's better to get up at six o'clock in summer. Nobody'll do it. But if you call six 'seven,' they'll do it gladly. Same way with religion,– they know that things like Virgin Births don't happen, but it makes life work smoother if they pretend to think so. The really intelligent people, Sam, are the ones who will get up at six, anyway, and have the courage to say it's six. That's what our generation's doing: learning to leave the bunk out."

"But how are you going to know whether what the bunk-believers have brought you up to think is right, *is* right?"

"Right and wrong are entirely independent of religion, Sam. There's a reason for getting up at six, whether you call it six or call it seven. There's a reason behind all moral standards. You say your father's 'wrong' about the strike: you mean because he wants the workers to lower their standard of living. I think he's wrong from his own point of view, too: he wants people to buy his goods,– he doesn't see that they can't buy them if they don't have high wages. It's the same way with this problem of yours,–"

"Olga, you mean?"

"Yes. Your father might tell you 'gentlemen didn't do it,'– I'd question that, myself, since the Great War. Your mother might talk to you about religion. Whereas you and I might say that in doing this you'd be allowing the girl to make a great deal bigger sacrifice than you were making yourself. Under the rules as they are now,– and they're not likely to change for quite a while,– it's always the woman who gets badly punished." Anne pushed the front door. She looked at Sammy standing, frowning, on the broad step. In love... No use to argue with people when they're in love... "Come in, a while?" she said.

"Hell! No!" said Sammy...

...

Her mother, reading, looking up from her book, smiling,– tears in her eyes... "Joan's book, dear. Cousin Emma had her letters published, you know."

"Let's see!" Anne took the book, stood, turning its stiff pages. 'The Colonel's such a fine man, Mother! You'd adore him...' Cousin Emma, adoring the Colonel,– Anne smiled. 'Monkey's going to G.H.Q. His heart is absolutely broken, of course. Says it's so lonely up there. And as for me, I,–' A picture of Joan and Lettice and the Colonel, smiling, on the balcony, above the horse-chestnut trees of Avenue Montaigne... 'Lettice,– the Colonel's secretary, such a pretty name and such a pretty, soft thing,– she's madly in love with a Canadian officer who's gone off to the front. Engaged, they are,–' "Bunk!" Anne slammed the book down, walked toward the doorway. Nice, old, reddish velvet curtains... 'Why Anne! Why do you say that?' Her mother, surprised...

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"Because, it doesn't tell the truth," said Anne from the stairs...

...

The door of the back study creaked, and opened. Anne looked up from her history books,– it must be late, now... Randolph limped in, and dropped down on the great, shabby leather sofa. "Your uncle's worried," he said. "It seems this beastly Russian's got a sister." 'I know,' said Anne. "It seems there was a scene, and Sam rushed off, and now your uncle wants me to pursue Sam back to college, and deliver him a moral lecture,– tell him how we fellers that went to the war triumphed over our temptations,–" Anne laughing... "Hell!" said Randolph.

"Well?" She looked at him. Muscles under his thin cheeks, twitching, twitching.

"I don't want to lecture anyone," said Randolph. "I'm no hero. God, Anne! I get sick of being taken for a hero! If they knew what we did between times,– but they will never know. They don't want to find out and nobody'll ever tell 'em." He got up, limped up and down behind the table. "Nobody's noble and nobody's all bad. You find that all out in War. Then when you get back, you find out you've got to go on pretending to be noble. Bah! I'm not ashamed of anything I did in France,– I'd do it over. But I won't lecture folks about their virtue!" Randolph sat down again on the old sofa,– damn that pain... A thousand years ago he and Geoff used to sit here, feet up, smoking, discussing what the world was... Randolph groaned. The gulf that lay between that life and this one... "It's easier to adjust yourself from peace to war, somehow, than from war to peace, Anne."

"Of course it is." Anne held a package of cigarettes toward him. "It's always easier to slide downhill than to climb up..."

...

Sammy pushed a wad of dirty bills down in his pocket. He'd sold his car, anyway,– that was the first step. Couldn't ask a girl to run off with you without money... Have to take the beastly street car up there... Olga oughtn't to live in half a squalid, wooden house here in these slums,– stop the damn car, get off... Olga so dark, so mysterious... Her fine head, with its man's black hair... Her voice, with its slightly foreign accent... The smell of,– Why was the window dark? What had happened? Sammy sprang up the shabby wooden steps, blew in the squeaker. Olga shouldn't live in tenements, with squeakers... The other door on the wooden porch opening, a motion slow and stealthy. Damn that Irish woman, always watching.

"She's gone!" Mrs. Margaret O'Hearn stood in the doorway. The b'y with the racin' automobile, wuz it? Well, he wouldn't be throublin' thim no more now... "This afthernoon! Bag and baggage!" said Mrs. O'Hearn.

"Gone where?"

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"Haith, and how should I know where thim Rooshans goes to? Time they got away, thim and their frinds, from a good, honest fambly." The b'y didn't hear her... The b'y turnin', roonin' down the sidewalk... Mrs. O'Hearn slammed the door. Rid of him and his nisy automobile, thank God...

...

Olga gone... Why hadn't he gone to her that afternoon instead of going to Downham? Ought to have known his father wouldn't help Petrovitch... Olga... The short, black hair that grew low on her white neck... Dark eyes, narrowing under the thick, black bang... White hands, holding his lapel, creeping up, round his neck, pulling his face toward,– That white face, her eyes closing, closing... The smell of,– 'God! Where's she gone? Where is she?' Sammy turned into a street of quiet residences, wide lawns. Professors and people lived here. Smug, quiet people, who taught you to think the world was all right, while people were being seized right here in their own town, tortured, deported. He walked fiercely. Down toward the river, where they used to walk together... Olga... Olga...

Little boys, with raucous voices, playing... Grappling each other, and rolling on the worn grass... 'Stoodent!' they shouted, 'Stoodent!' Perhaps after all Olga hadn't gone... Perhaps she'd just moved to avoid Department of Justice Agents... 'Justice,'– God... There might be a letter from her at his room, now. Better go see... Olga... The stairs of the dormitory clattered as he ran up. 'Say, we're playin' a hand of poker. Sitin?' A head in a doorway. 'Shut up.' Faster... She must have left word... Yes. There was a letter on the floor. Paper, sticking, damn it... The light, damn it... Sammy slumped down in the armchair. So, she'd been married all along... Why hadn't she told him? Wouldn't have made any difference, of course,– only,– Black hair growing low on her white neck... White hands, holding his lapel and creeping upward... White face... White eyelids closing, closing... The smell of,– A knock at the door, he wouldn't answer, damn it. Why hadn't he locked it?

Randolph pushing it open... By God, the family could just let him alone, now. Randolph, who, just because he'd gone and ruined his damn leg in the fool war, thought he had an excuse to live off Father... Sammy jumped up and pushed the door... "Get out of here!" he bellowed. Just like Father...

"Listen, old top! I've come to talk to you about,–" Randolph's foot against the door, his arm, holding...

"I know, you have. And it's no use. She's gone. I don't know where she is. Now you just get to Hell out of here, you,–" Sammy stopped. You couldn't call a man a parasite when he had one leg... Randolph limping in, taking his hat off: "Listen, son," Randolph lit a cigarette, let himself down into a chair, his bad leg forward. His breath jerked, a twinge of pain,–

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"I know how it is." Randolph gazed at the table. The boy, listening ... Sliding into the other chair, legs across its arm, dangling, swinging ... Randolph sêttled back into his chair, blew his smoke upward. "There was a time,– in Paris..."

...

Sammy opened the window, breathed in a long draught of dampish night air. Below in the darkness among the dead leaves he could see Randolph, limping slowly, toward the automobile at the Yard gate. The clock in the tower above the elm trees, struck two. The limping figure disappeared around the corner. So he had,– So,– A fine feller like Randolph... So War was,– "Gosh," said Sammy...

...

Anne banged the front door. The morning air, cold. Have to hurry, – the Eight-Sixteen was coming... Men, in overcoats, stepping nervously toward the station. All ahead of you,– you'd have to run then... She ran. Randolph, standing at the corner. Why was Randolph up so early? He had nothing to get up for,– "Hello. I thought you'd like to know the Russian lady's left town." 'Good.' She dashed past, panting. Randolph watched her. God! To have legs like that, that you could run with... Speed, there! Ah, she'd get it! He watched the line of overcoats moving slowly forward on the platform, newspapers in hand. Saying good morning to Anne,– Anne buttoning up her coat, putting her gloves on... All getting on the, train. The train puffing white clouds into the cold air, starting toward the city. All those folks had to be somewhere in forty minutes... The world, waiting for 'em... Randolph turned, slowly,– ugh, that pain,– Those men would go to offices and sit, boxed up... Better than wandering back to breakfast and after that watching Rosalind bathe the baby. God, who'd have thought he'd end up by watching women bathing babies? He limped on, slowly... If only War would,– But he couldn't go,– they didn't take the cripples... 'Hell!' said Randolph...

...

Books... Anne sat in the College Library, books propped about her. Her eyes followed the bare twigs of elm trees beyond the window. Books, like dreams... Dreams that meant something, yet meant nothing... Life must be sliding past... Life, somewhere, outside, way off... Life must be somewhere... Life, a plate of soup, that had grown cold... Without salt... There had been hot soup, once... And salt, that War put,– Go on! Never get done this thesis...

...

A letter waiting on the table by the front door. 'Compañía Sud Americana de Vapores,' and Jerry's clear, unbeautiful handwriting. 'The saloon is rising, sinking,'– so Jerry was loose again... 'A Portuguese Jew and a British soldier of fortune are sitting over whiskey and soda, swapping stories. Through the portholes, the blue sea, appearing, disappearing... The Englishman ordering another

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whiskey, talking of Bombay. And so, I'm off again, Anne! With the clear kick that you get, somehow, from the companionship of wanderers and outcasts. Come with me, Anne, next time'... God... She stuffed the letter into her pocket. "He'll have to stop sometime, though. When he stops, it'll be worse,–"

"Have some tea, dear?" said her mother. "What were you saying?"

"Oh, nothing," Anne said...

...

"I'm worried about Randolph." Mrs. Wentworth laid down her sewing and looked across the tea tray at the fire. 'Why?' Anne ate cake. Wonderful, to eat cake... "I don't criticize him for living with Uncle Caleb and doing nothing,– Uncle Caleb has plenty, and Randolph's earned it. But I don't think Randolph's happy. Your cousin Thomas Emerson came home from the Civil War like that, and lived for a while on being a hero, and,– well,– just never got started. I'm afraid Randolph,–"

"But Randolph isn't living on being a hero. He hates this hero business." Anne got up, lit a cigarette, walked round the parlor. "He's restless, that's all. We're all restless." Legs too long for this room... Its low bookcases, its worn, soft rugs, the black jar with sprays of juniper against the white wall. Dear room... The gentle firelight filling the whole place, moving, moving... 'When you were over there,' her mother saying, gently, 'you used to want to get back. Now that you're back, you don't,–' Anne stood in the doorway, hand grasping the soft, reddish velvet curtain.

"Well, you can't expect people to be happy," she said...

...

Anne turned on her bath and took her clothes off, slowly. Randolph *was* unhappy,– entangled in all the elegancies of Aunt Anna's régime... Wanting to paint,– where could he paint in that great, shining house there? His mother, always writing to him for more money... Telling him she was glad that he was comfortable, and then how uncomfortable and lonely she was... A job, that would earn money, dangling before him... And his artistic soul revolted by it...

Rosalind, always thinking of her baby,– how much it ate, how much it weighed last week... Rosalind, happy... Strikes didn't bother Rosalind, nor arguments about the League of Nations... Anne put her bare foot into the hot water, sank down. Water rising, bringing warmth around you, melting away the great world... Domesticity would be a hot bath... After a while, though, baths grew cold...

...

Anne walked down the platform with her daily paper. Commuters,– 'Good morning,' 'Good morning,'– moving toward the city. Life, moving like the shuttle of a machine now,– backward, forward ... Nothing would ever happen... Randolph, coming toward her,

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walking with his head thrown back, the way he used to,– his limp not bad today.

"I've had an offer of a job!" His eyes shone...

"Not Uncle Caleb?"

"No. A real job. Neal, he paints frescoes in New York,– he's doing a sort of dome with sky and airplanes. A boy from the Escadrille told him about my sketches. He wants to see 'em. I'm taking them to New York." Anne's eyes,– the way they used to look in Paris... She wouldn't think this was crazy, like the others...

"Good!" she said, "I'm glad..."

...

Home, through the darkness, tired... You did your stunt, and then Life's shuttle brought you... The front path. The door,– there was her mother, her funny, conservative, black hat perched high on her head. "Your Uncle Caleb's had a stroke. He's very ill. I'm going up there." The sweet, thin face was filled with sorrow. Filled with the memory of a day in summer,– Anne watched the quaint, black golf cape disappear into the darkness, briskly.

She sat down, by the fire, poured her tea out. A pleasant way to die, in your own house, with all your people round you... After you'd lived your life... Death that cheated you out of part of Life, that grabbed it away just as it was,– just as,– that was,– But once you'd lived,– she sipped hot tea,– Death wouldn't greatly matter. To die alone, out in the mud and darkness, when you were young and wanted to taste Life, to feel the north wind, to see the stars above you... To touch a hand that, somehow,– that,– Anne lit a cigarette. She watched the white puffs floating upward... Swirling... Disappearing there, above the books, among the shadows...

...

"They've sent for Randolph." Mrs. Wentworth stood, warming her thin hands. Anne could feel the cold air from the folds of her mother's thick skirt.

"No! Not just as he's found these artist people?"

"Why Anne!" Her mother's pale face full of sorrow... "Your uncle's dying!" Horrible to her to have a permanent, stable life like Uncle Caleb's threatened... To see her generation beginning to topple over,– a generation that had not contemplated dying... Anne got up and walked toward the doorway.

"Dying sometimes takes a long time," she said...

...

Gentle rain fell in the dark woods as Anne walked through them. Go up and see Rosalind,– she'd be missing Randolph... Still, she had her baby,– A syren screeched. A car slowed down beside her. 'Heard anything?' Sammy's voice, shaky... 'Nothing more.' Anne got in, beside him. Anne, cool... He stopped behind her on the stone steps. Couldn't go in... Couldn't... She was opening the door, holding

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it for him. Death... What was it? Not the pleasant Rendez-Vous that the Guv'nor and his mother thought it... The Guv'nor, plunging into Space, and into Nothing... Anne, holding the door open, quiet... "Come on," she said. Sammy bounded past her and up the heavy stairway. 'Mother' she heard him mutter. The library, its shaded lamps, its fire blazing, camellias blossoming in the bow window. Ruthy, crouched in the corner of the great sofa, tears dripping down her cheeks, plopping onto the pages of her book. She gazed into the fire. "We've made him miserable all winter," she said.

"Who has?"

"Sammy and I,– fighting all winter. You see, Anne, I think he's wrong about the big things: the strike, the League of Nations,– all that. He thinks I'm wicked, because I wear short skirts, and powder, and smoke,– Mother makes such mountains out of molehills."

"Where you and Sam make your mistake," Anne lit a cigarette and sat down, "is arguing with them. That generation have always had things their way,– they can't discuss things. But you can get along with them if you never talk about anything important. I get along with Father. We two disagree on all the big things. The one thing I care about right now is that this country should go on with the League of Nations. It's more than just a political opinion: I've seen the world mad. The only justification for the madness was that it would make things so it never would happen again. Our generation put the thing through with that idea before us, and now the older generation are trying to let us down. Father among them. He's got an idea that somehow America can stand aloof from Europe. So I just talk to him about the birds and flowers."

"But when you love people, you hate to have them thinking wrong things."

"The great stunt of loving people," said Anne, "is not to mind what they think..."

...

Rosalind lifted a soft, white bundle out of the muslin-covered cradle. Tiny hands, meeting above the rounded forehead. Tiny mouth, yawning. Little snortings, puffings. Eyelids, unscrewing, opening. Bright eyes, blinking, looking, at Anne, at the light, at Rosalind. Bright eyes fixed on Rosalind, lips pursing, sucking... Rosalind patting, talking. As if the little thing could understand her...

"Poor Father!" she turned toward Anne. 'Yes.' "But Anne, he isn't suffering. And Mother's with him. This way is easy,–"

"You've telephoned Randolph?" Anne watched her unwinding the baby's legs, unpinning,– Only half her mind was on the world outside this room here...

"Yes. He's coming. He's upset,– it seems this man Neal really liked his sketches, asked him to come tomorrow,–" She leaned the little creature against her shoulder, patting its back. "Now I don't

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suppose we can leave Mother. And anyway, I don't feel at all sure New York would be healthy for the baby,– Poor Father,– Don't go, Anne." Anne, making for the door...

"Poor Randolph," she said...

...

The thesis. Elbows, wearing out your shirt-waist against the table. Anne leaned her head back, rumpled her short hair, leaned forward again. Work, that swallowed you, took you away from this world... 'The Practicability of an International Court of Justice.' Rubbish... This chapter: 'A Court Without Police Power to Enforce Decisions.' Dreams, these... She picked up the books. Start for the train... Hurry... Against the pink sky, the elm buds swelling... They were real, those...

From the foul stench of train air, out, to freshness, and the smell of damp earth. Anne took her hat off, swung it in her hand as she walked from the station. Aunt Anna considered it 'uncouth' to take your hat off. Wore hers tied on with speckled veils, and pinned with jewels. Uncle Caleb, dying,– she had forgot that. Up there in the big house beyond the tree-tops. Near the bridge, a white mist rising from the river... Out of the mist, the joyous song of hylas... More permanent than Uncle Caleb, that sound... Chill in the air,– the cold spring of New England. Every New-Englander might die, but Spring would go on... Hylas,– Singing... Singing...

...

Randolph, in her father's chair before the fire, his feet up, body slouching. "How's Uncle Caleb?" Anne asked.

"About the same. Just lies there,– all the starch gone, a sort of agony in his eyes." Randolph sat, silent, his temple resting on his fingers. Anne poked the fire. "Hell, Anne," he said, suddenly, "I'd rather go overboard out of a plane, and have it done with. When you get old, you lose your nerve about Death. It's bad to lie there, and see gradually that all your ideas about God's Heaven are bunk. Better to die while you still dare to take a chance on going Nowhere,– To go on, and just laugh at Death, until it hits you."

"In the hospital they didn't laugh at Death much." Anne clasped her hands behind her head, and put her feet up. "All this talk about laying your life down gladly for your country is rot, of course. I never saw anyone who didn't swear at dying. You were just cheated out of Life, and knew it."

"Yes, but we lived knowing that one of these days we'd drop down. In Peace you get the attitude that things'll go on forever, and when Death comes and grins at you, you're frightened."

"Uncle Caleb's giving a Memorial Chapel to the University," Anne said. Randolph laughed.

"Yes. Appropriate, isn't it, seein' the old religion's one of the things they saw through at the Great War? Hell! A memorial Public

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House would have been better!" Randolph ran his long, thin fingers through his hair. "I'm sick of all this hypocrisy around here," he said. "These people get a chance to vote for something that will help to stop War, and they'll vote wrong. And then, they'll make a chapel to the glory of a God no one believes in. Your uncle's been good to me. I'm grateful for it, God knows. If I'd told him the truth about what we all did at the Great War, he'd have probably kicked me out long since. I've kept smug,– played his game, but nevertheless, I hate it."

"And Neal?" said Anne. "What did he say?"

"I could have got the job, Anne, if I'd stayed." Randolph eager, leaning forward. "He wanted me to come back,–" He shook his head, slumped back. "It's no use. There's the damn money. They're all haired up about the money, up there. Mrs. Huntington's only got a month's supply in her private account. Never had more than that, Ros says. She doesn't know a thing about his income,– doesn't know that the chapel's coming from the B.V.D.'s. Extraordinary, his wife,–"

"No," said Anne, "not in that generation. They keep their matrimony and their business separate."

"Yes, but business is the prime concern of his life. It colors all his opinions,– about God, about the League of Nations and about the working class,– about everything else, and yet she doesn't know a thing about it. They think that married couples who don't get on are wicked. I wonder if *they* get on?"

"Sure," said Anne. "Marriage is like a foot in an old shoe. The foot doesn't have to understand the shoe,– just has to stretch it."

"But God! Marriage ought to be better than that!" Randolph pulled himself out of his chair. His face, wincing from the pain that,– He stood, back to the hearth, looking across to where the firelight wavered on the books' backs. "It ought to amount to more than just feeding a man, giving him,– children. There ought to be a sort of spark, a sort of,– spirit, something to carry you along after love cools off,–"

"Ros wants you to go to New York?" said Anne. He looked down at the hearth rug. Better not meet Anne's grey eyes,– they wanted Life clear... Wanted to see it straight, without its shadows... He limped toward the door, ducked through the old, red curtains.

"I don't know," he said...

...

A great, solid coffin, silver handles dangling against black cloth. Anne bent over, arranging wreaths of flowers against the trestle thing that held it. Randolph limped in, carrying more wreaths. Palms. Purple ribbons. Cards of the Mayor, the Governor, officials of the University, banks, hospitals. Randolph standing, looking at the black thing. His long, thin fingers touching the silver handle. "Two poles do just as well," he said. "We buried Garlough on two struts,

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wrapped in a blanket." He stood, looking out the open window into the trees. Somewhere a sparrow twittered. "We stuck his propeller over him," said Randolph...

...

Church, great and gloomy. Ushers, in frock coats, greeting people with solemn nods, and no smiles. Looking for names on lists that were typewritten. Anne, sitting beside her mother and Josiah. People with fine faces. Eminent people, with expressions of respectful sorrow. The President of the University, eminent doctors, lawyers. Judges. Faces, like marble faces of Roman Senators in the Louvre... Wives, dressed in the style of Queen Victoria, their greying hair drawn back under quaint hats, showing their fine ears. High collars, like the countesses at Madame du Mourgues'. Same fine conservatism... And on their serene faces, gentle sorrow. Sitting down, crossing their hands before them, drawing a long breath. Silence...

The family. The tall, full figure of Aunt Anna, swathed in black crêpe... Sammy, with a black band. Sammy's chin trembling, child-like. A tall, straight figure in dull black,— Ruthy. Another, Rosalind. Randolph, leaning on a cane and going slowly. Disgusted to have to limp before all these,— Randolph, slipping his hand under Rosalind's elbow, reaching for her black glove...

Pallbearers, distinguished gentlemen, walking slowly. Coming, on wheels somehow, that smooth, enormous black thing. The scent of violets... Huge wreath of violets lying on the black cloth. Anne turned her head. Josiah's white face, outlined against the stone arch. Josiah who had worked hard, and whose income had been cut in half at the last... Whose family had been cut in half... He too, would,— Anne's lip trembled. She stopped it. Hysterical to weep now... Uncle Caleb,— These people, with their fine faces, had wanted everyone to go and die for an Ideal. Now they wanted to undo everything the dying had done...

A Bishop, walking up the aisle in great sleeves. Oh, you stood,— 'I am the Resurrection and the Life...' Anne's eyes closed. A Y.M.C.A. man standing in a field of mud and blinking, blinking... Trying to separate two pages that the rain had stuck together... Mud, oozing up against the white boards of a pine box... Staining the wood ... Box, splashing at the bottom of a dark hole... Fetching the next one... Soldiers with red hands, struggling, slipping in slimy mud... Uncle Caleb's mills, working overtime, making underclothing for the soldiers... Men, lying in underclothing in pine boxes... Lying in mud... All for nothing... All their work undone... Uncle Caleb rejoicing that it had been undone... The great, black coffin with its silver handles, gliding past again now. No struggle to carry this thing... No ropes, cutting wet, red hands... No boots staggering, slipping... No curses... This thing sailed on... A tear dripped down Anne's cheek, dropped from her chin, lay poised, a ball of crystal in her rough tweed. Round,

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like the poor world... Another, dripping... Not weeping for old Caleb ... Not for him...

...

Another day, done. The thesis finished, handed to the Professor. Anne found a seat in the train, unrolled her paper. 'Industrial depression.' 'Reds,' being deported. Unsettled strikes. A war in Poland. The wrangle through the whole land about the Treaty. You fought a war, and then,– "Hello!" Randolph sat down beside her. "Listen to this," said Anne. She began reading: "'We have no more moral right to refuse now to take part in the execution and administration of these settlements than we had to refuse to take part in the fighting of the last few weeks of the war which brought victory... Our fidelity to our associates is in question, and the whole future of mankind.' That's Wilson." Why were Randolph's eyes avoiding her eyes...

"Hell," he said. "I've forgotten all about that. I've got a job, Anne. I'm a plutocrat. Down with the Bolsheviks! Back to normal business! Make the U.S. rich! Let old Europe stew in her own juice,–"

"Randolph, what have you gone and done?" Anne turned round toward him... Why didn't his eyes,–

"I've accepted a position in my late father-in-law's office. His partners tell me it was his wish that I should have it. My lameness, they say, will prevent my working up through the mill. Anyway, the damned old mills will probably shut down,–"

"But your painting? Your sketches? Neal,– you've heard from him?"

"He'll pay me for my sketches. That'll be a special fund I'll put aside, Anne. Clean money,– apart from this appalling sum they're paying,– Don't make a face, Anne."

"God! You'll be getting smug, like all the others," Anne said.

...

June. A Sunday morning. Anne lay on the cool grass behind the house at Downham. Blue sky, white clouds, the scent of lilacs... Her mother's back, slender, white-clad, bending as she snipped iris with her scissors. Anne sighed. Examinations over,– she'd have her master's degree in three days now. Once, long ago, to be a Master of Arts had seemed a great thing. Now it meant nothing. Having it, left the old blank: what to do next? Life, empty... A wagon, to hitch a star to... Worst thing the War did,– give you that need of Causes, – something to care more for than for yourself... And now, there were no Causes... Round the house came Rosalind and Randolph,– Randolph went to church now. His shoulders stooping from having leaned so long on that cane... Rosalind's black chiffon billowing out about him... "Hello!" They sat down next her. Randolph unrolled a paper. "They've nominated a guy named Harding," he said.

"Who's he?" Anne asked.

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"Oh, some old dodo from Ohio. Wall Street is for him,– they think he'll fight against the League of Nations. Let business alone,– make the world safe for limousines and bathtubs,–" 'Don't let's talk about it.' Rosalind laid her hand on his. He clasped it.

"So we're going to decide in this election what we fought the war for?" Anne looked at Randolph. He nodded. Rosalind's dreamy eyes looked past them, at the river...

"The baby gained a whole pound this week," she said...

...

July. A wilting heat. Cicadas sizzling in the overhanging elm trees. The parlor, shrouded in its white, summer covers. Anne lay on the sofa, a book in her lap... You couldn't read... You had forgotten this tropic summer of your own land,– France with its cool, soft rain,– Germany,– the nights so cold you used to build a fire... Men's faces round the warm stove,– Cleary and Pete and,– long, long ago, that... She picked up the newspaper. The Democrats, standing for the League of Nations. The struggle, looming... Whether Americans were idealists,– or traitors... Heat,– not conducive to profound thinking... Perhaps the reason why Americans were shallow,– they kept their houses just as hot in winter... The Postman, perspiring up between the phlox and larkspur. Her mother, offering him a glass of water. Mother, in her quaint, dotted muslin, coming across the bare, waxed floor with letters. "One from Aunt Anna. And one from Jerry, for you..." She perched on a chair arm, opened the thick, black-edged thing. From Bar Harbor...

"Heavens! Why, Ruth's engaged!" She fumbled for her glasses. "'To a very delightful youth named,–' dear me, Aunt Anna never skips to the same page, ah: 'de Lancey, James Alphonse de Lancey,–'" Anne stared at the bare floor. The hall of the Hospital at Bordeaux... Sun, coming from the garden... The smell of magnolia leaves, wet with the dew... A young man on the orderly bench, avoiding her eye... 'Say, I see you got G.U.'s waitin' on you,'– a nurse, that whispered... "'He won all sorts of distinction in the war,'" her mother read on, "'was promoted from the ranks for bravery in action, became a Captain, later a Major. Decorated with the Croix de Guerre and with the D.S.C. A really fine man,–'" Anne laughed. Her mother looked up. "What's the matter?"

"Oh, I used to know him in the army," Anne said.

...

A letter from Jerry. A photograph,– shadowy mountains rising out of glassy water... Lights, that reflected... Jerry, full of enthusiasm, full of adventure: 'Chuck it, Anne! The world can't be reformed! Come and travel with me...' Another letter. Typewritten,– the Office of the Dean. So she had a job for you. The 'New York State Association of Women Citizens!' wanted someone to write speeches for them, did they... Speeches that would 'put the international situation

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clearly before the newly franchised Woman Voter...' Someone else made the speeches. The salary, Gosh, that much? The Dean could think of no one who could do it better,– It would be, so the Dean said, 'a chance to help clarify those principles which liberal thinkers throughout the country have so vitally at heart at present...' Anne lay still, gazing through the open window... Bees, bumping the hollyhocks in the afternoon sun. Something unreal about all this,– they couldn't really want her to write speeches... The country couldn't really be doubting what they'd fought for... Josiah, tired, walking up the pathway. Stopping, now to look at phlox and larkspur. Josiah, who'd vote Republican, like everyone else, who was not 'foreign' in New England. Mother, on the step, kissing him, leading him into the cool hall. He'd be all alone when Mother went down to Aunt Anna's, if she should go to New York... Tears in her eyes. He'd be happier alone than with her here,– thinking everything he thought was wrong and foolish... She blew her nose. Silly to cry... Different generations never thought the same way. The older always thought the younger crazy... Dear Father... Dear, dear Father...

...

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BOOK VII

"If Peace doesn't bring about a United States of Europe, it will be only a truce and everything will begin all over again."

ANATOLE FRANCE

"The chance of war has given us an opportunity to begin afresh. May the Lord have mercy upon us if we choose wrong once more."

VAN LOON

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BOOK VII

TRAIN, moving smoothly, swiftly. Anne gazed out the window. Wonderful to be moving... You could stand life, if you could just keep moving... But to sit there, to know that in that same spot you would one day grow old. That was what everybody in this country wanted, – to have a chance to stay at home, and grow old. She turned the morning paper. 'Back to normalcy' Harding, on his 'front porch.' A typical American, that Harding...

Suburban houses flashing past the window, faster, faster. Screened-in porches, neat, concrete-floored garages. Back to 'normalcy...' To mediocrity... To sitting on glassed-in porches... Riding in automobiles, with tops up, cutting the sun off... Steam radiators sizzling... Bathrooms lined with white tiles, glass rods for shoddy towels... Get rich, so you could have more automobiles to ride in... Ride where? Men, growing white and pudgy. Men, who'd been capable of dying for an Ideal... But were they? Or were they just dying because it was the thing to do at that time? Did any of them really know just what they fought for?

Two salesmen on the next seat talking of stockings. A 'game' they called it,– stockings. Their 'line' was 'near silk.' Barbarians... Barbarians, who liked to be glassed in... Whose grandfathers had got too much fresh air,– tramping the furrows. Chopping the wood in winter. Their sons liked 'homes' that were glassed in, with nice gas ranges... Liked women in 'near silk' stockings. Anne shifted on the sticky velveteen of the hot seat. Tomorrow,– ah, the battle again! A last stand in this strange fight... Against 'normalcy'... 'Normalcy,' creeping about one... Glassing one in... Keeping the air out... Making one smug, provincial...

...

An elevator, that made your stomach heavy as it swam you upward. A large, corner office on the fourteenth floor, full of women, very busy. Anne stepped in, slowly, watching. Fashionable women in pearl necklaces, soft, summer dresses. Women politicians, dowdy, with glasses that pinched their noses. Stenographers in organdy of many colors,– gay, carefree. Bright butterflies, that flitted in among the politicians... A Jewish girl, stopping before Anne, asking her what she 'wished,' thinking her clothes looked queer, her shoes too flat-heeled... Saying 'Oh yes, she'd go and see if Mrs. Carson,–' A window. Through it a chasm, unbelievable, deep, narrow. Rows of win-

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dows, growing smaller as they receded. Sun, filling the spaces, turning the rhomboid shadows into purple. Ants in the street below there, crawling, crawling... A train on a high trestle, moving, moving... New York...

"Come in, Miss Wentworth!" Mrs. Carson shook hands, waved to a chair, sat back behind her mahogany desk before a window that opened on another chasm of purple rhomboids. Mrs. Carson was middle-aged, pearl-necklaced,– dressed like a girl of eighteen. Middle age did not turn to dignity in New York,– "Our speakers, as you know," she said, "are the same women who used to speak for Woman Suffrage. That fight is over. But we have kept our organization together to educate the Woman Voter..."

Anne listened, her eyes on Mrs. Carson's matched pearls,– each one a little world of gentle colors. So, it was momentum that kept these ladies agitating... The need of Causes... Of stars, to which to hitch their empty wagons,– These ladies had fought for one Cause, – now they must have Another... Queer, that in war-time, anyone should have acquired a habit of fighting... Anne was to help collect the facts of their Cause... The Pearl Necklaces made speeches,– she supplied facts...

"Oh, I see," she said...

...

Heat. Anne turned from the open window to her typewriter. Three weeks hadn't cured her of watching ants, perpetually crawling in the chasm. Her desk, piled with papers. Mrs. Dean, going on a tour tomorrow, wanting quotations. 'I cannot do better than to quote you,' Anne's typewriter, clicking, 'a message from our Great Leader,–' Mrs. Dean could make her voice quiver when she said 'Our Great Leader'... "'The position of America in this war is so clearly avowed that no man can be excused for mistaking it... We are fighting for the liberty, the self-government and the undictated development of all peoples.'" Anne pushed her fingers back through her short hair. What use to give these women voters theories? What women voters ought to have was facts about War... Once they saw facts, they'd fix the world so that their sons and husbands couldn't fight another. They wouldn't send them into the arms of prostitutes of foreign countries. Not even with lots of prophylactic stations,– 'Ready, Miss Wentworth?' The Jew girl, cool, superior, holding Mrs. Dean's brown leather brief case.

"Yes, all ready," Anne said...

...

An upstate town. The train slowed, stopping before the platform at Almira. Anne moved down the car aisle toward the doorway. Great God, why had Mrs. Dean's husband gone and got sick? Why had she let them send her to take Mrs. Dean's place? She, Anne, making speeches? Why should the women voters of Almira listen to her?

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The brakeman, taking her bag, holding her elbow, smiling at the girl with short hair. 'Thanks.'

Anne looked up and down the platform. Perhaps they wouldn't meet her... Perhaps they'd forget, and she could go back... God, she hoped so... Fear, gripping her, and making her a coward... She took her handkerchief, and dried her damp lips. First time she had ever really felt Fear... The Cause,– worth it. One had stood danger for it. But danger was fun... The things one did were simple... This thing was complicated, was appalling... Perspiration trickling down one's spine. One's hands cold. A woman with red hair and pointed nose coming toward her. Glasses that pinched the skin of her nose into a soft ridge. She wore a summer dress and white suede boots.

"Miss Wentworth? Pleased to meet you, I am sure, Miss Wentworth." Mrs. Roy L. Smith, President of the Association of Women Citizens of Almira, led Anne round the station. Queer-looking girl the Association had sent up... Such big eyes, such a white face... That plain, black hat... That plain, dark dress, hanging, like a little girl's dress from her shoulders... Short as a little girl's dress... She couldn't have another one in this small bag... Must be going to speak in this one... Something more dressy,– Heavens, was that short hair under the hat brim as she bent to get into the Sedan? Surely the Association wouldn't send a girl with short hair? Mrs. Smith climbed in. "You'll want to change your clothes, I presume, before the meeting?" The queer girl was looking out the Sedan window. Nothing to see here... Hadn't come to the town yet... Didn't seem to hear,–

"I'd like to take a bath," said Anne. Lovely hills, with pastures straggling up them. If you could only go up and lie there, on the cropped grass... Those junipers would smell good...

"Oh!" Mrs. Smith gasped. One didn't talk about bathing, in the daytime, in Almira. She had put only 'guest towels' in the bathroom ... "Yes," she said, "certainly, certainly."

They slowed down for the Main Street. A row of wooden stores, with false fronts. Fronts built to make the roofs look flat, when they were really slanting. Had to be slanting for the snow in winter,– but they looked flat. Or did they? You could see behind the false fronts... Stores, with concrete sidewalks running past them. The street was concrete,– a state road, running northward. A thousand years from now, after the wooden town had rotted, vanished, some other race would excavate this great road, leading to occasional rows of concrete sidewalks. Explore the concrete sidewalks and find they led to,– The Sedan stopped. The concrete path led to a wooden house, painted grey with white posts. "Our little home!" Mrs. Smith, opening the front door. People didn't often go in this front door,– there must be a back door somewhere, through a woodshed,–

Anne walked in. Varnished posts, supporting an archway, beyond it a sitting room, with green shades pulled down. Lace curtains,

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draped in big loops before the green shades. A victrola. A piano. A fireplace, made of green tiles, with two dusty, birch logs. Above the mantel, varnished shelves and squares of mirror. Electric light in the middle of the ceiling, behind a huge frosted basin hung on brass chains. The windows all closed. On the table a photograph of a soldier. His overseas cap at an angle, hair slicked backward... Full, sensuous lips ... Impudent, flashing eyes,– 'Promenade?' they said...

"Your son?" Anne turned to the prim, red-haired woman.

"That's our boy, Earl. He was in France six months." Anne followed her up the hideous, varnished stairway. France. A peasant's broad door, opening off a muddy roadway... Smooth tiled floor, huge copper kettles, shining... The great hood over a hearth, built for logs, where now they burned twigs...

"This is your room." Mrs. Smith opened a door. Clean. Spotless. White starched curtains. Varnished, gold-oak bed, varnished bureau, table next the bed all made of gewgaws. Electric bulb in the middle of the ceiling. Windows, all closed. Mrs. Smith opened another door. A bathroom. Linoleum shining, spotless. Clean, white tub. White fixtures. Glass rods,– on them hand towels, embroidered with forget-me-knots and roses...

Anne smiled. Behind the peasant's house you'd find a garden, hens, a rabbit hutch, a strong smell. Following the smell, you'd find a pent-house... A stench... On the shed floor, a board with a round hole, slime oozing round it... 'Un creux dans la terre...'

"In France I went without a bath for two years," Anne said. "So now, every time I can, I take one,–"

"Certainly," Mrs. Smith, blushing. From a drawer she took a small bath towel. Sooner these young folks forgot that France, the better... From what Earl said... And didn't say...

"Thank you. That's fine," Anne said...

...

Rows of women's faces in the Grange Hall below her. Skeptical faces, looking disapproval at her short hair. At her short skirts. Some day everyone would wear,– Mrs. Smith, next Anne on the platform, rising, stepping forward. Saying a 'few words.' Her turn would come next... God, her voice, her throat... She couldn't swallow. Couldn't leave her chair. Couldn't step forward. Faces... 'Stimulate them to think.' *Would* they think, these women? The whole world buzzing... Now she was standing, looking out into the rows of faces, fingering her notes, waiting for the polite claps to stop. These women, she felt sure, their sons,– Anne heard her own voice jerky... Their sons had gone to war. She wanted to tell them first a little bit what War was like, as she had seen it. A lie, you couldn't tell them... Afterwards she would recall to them what, according to the President, the war had been for, clear up the principles that lay behind it. And after that, she wanted to show them how they must decide before

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November whether the country was to go on supporting those principles, or whether they were to embark on a new principle,– the principle of standing aloof from Europe.

Anne heard her voice,– surprising how the voice went,– telling of a hospital in June, of men on stretchers, a yard, bigger than this hall, covered with men on stretchers. Telling of men wounded. Bleeding... Struggling out of ether... Cursing... Men who groped the air, and gripped your arm, in blindness... The rows of faces softened. The women had forgotten she had short hair... She ought to go on,– ought to tell them of those other wards one didn't speak of... Tell them of darkened towns, with blue lights... Of the women, who hovered just outside the blue lights, waiting... 'Couchez... Couchez...' To tell them of the 'cafard' and what you'd do when you were hungry, homesick... To tell of the U.S. Army's prophylactic stations. Give them statistics. Couldn't. They'd throw you out. They wouldn't listen... War must be noble... They must send their sons to Glory... Not to the arms of diseased foreign women...

Anne's voice went on. Came to the League of Nations. The faces narrowed. It wasn't perfect... It was a compromise between the old world and the new one. Everything was a compromise,– nothing in this world, nothing, ever, perfect. What mattered was the spirit that you put behind it. Whether you were going to help Europe, or whether you were going to stand aside and let it,– The faces hardened. Did they know more about France than she'd thought? Did they suspect things? Or did they just want prosperity? And automobiles... Want their husbands' stores to sell more goods... She spoke of Harding. The women smiled, looking at one another. *Here* was a mentality that they could follow... That fine, fly-screened, front porch! Thank God, this speech was nearly over... Anne reached for a newspaper on the table. 'I cannot do better,' she heard her voice go,– ridiculous, all this... 'than to read you the President's last message to the Senate Committee: "It would put a stain on our national honor which we could never efface if, after sending our men to the battlefront to fight in the common cause, we should abandon our associates in the settlement of the terms of peace and disassociate ourselves from all responsibility with regard to those terms..."' Good God... She sat. Feeling for her handkerchief. They were clapping. They knew you always clapped when speeches ended. Mrs. Smith turning to her, smiling sharply, relieved that it was over.

"How very interesting your experiences in France must have been, Miss Wentworth." Perhaps she cut her hair off to avoid bugs... People said, in those foreign countries, that there *were* bugs... Anne mopped her hot face, walked after Mrs. Smith toward the doorway. "Yes," she said, "yes."

...

Another hot train. Anne watched the parched fields whizz by. Well,

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it was over, this summer of making speeches. Would it be wasted? Would the whole three years that went before, be wasted? What were these women thinking, who sat in rows, their quizzical narrow faces turned toward you? Boring, this last engagement of the great fight... 'The world safe...' The young people of the future would be bored,— Youth was capable of so much more than Safety... God, to be back in France,— Mustn't think that... You were trying to make the world Safe...

...

November. The summer over. Tomorrow, the election. Anne, going home to cast her first vote. The train moved swiftly, smoothly. Outside, oak trees glowing wine-red in the winter sunshine, grey stone walls, flashing past. She pulled a letter from her pocket. Jerry's writing. How it had grown familiar... Like an old shoe, Jerry... 'I'm coming home, Anne! On the very next boat after the one that brings this. Due in New York November second. I suppose it's asking too much to expect you to meet me? Anyway I'll come around that evening. Anne, I've been thinking ever since I've been gone,—' Same old stuff... She laid the letter down. Outside, gold sand and the waters of the Sound, all blue and turquoise. Good old Jerry... If you could only feel the least twinge of excitement over Jerry... She opened her book.

"Judas." People were talking of it in New York and London... Randolph had sent it to her,— 'the best book I've ever read,' he'd written. About the war. About a chaplain in the British Army, who ... Saw that nobody wanted religion in the army... Lost his religion... Found a girl,— such a nice girl... Anne read on...

...

On and on... She looked up. The window, black now. Her face, reflected dimly. All armies were alike, then... A welter of separate people, all young, all hurled together... All a thousand miles from home, and lonely... A parson, who went to war with such a glorious vision... Whose vision faded, faded,— like every picture that one has of things beforehand... Till he couldn't remember what the vision had been... Couldn't find it... Who found Youth, snatching at moments of pleasure, tasting the thrill of Life, before Death hit them... A man who, at the end, could feel only His Own Moment... A girl, who gave,—

Anne leaned her head back. A room... A room in Paris, summer light diffused dimly through closed shutters... The scent of lilies... Woman in blue and gold, standing, hands clasped behind her... Hair, the color of pale straw, shining, greenish... Eyes narrowing into slits behind long lashes... 'Tell him, that in France it is the custom,—'

"Your bag, lady," the porter, reaching.

"Oh!" Anne said, "yes..."

...

Downham. Belated business men, swinging off the Six-Fifteen, and walking briskly... The same as ever... Nothing ever changed at

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Downham. Tomorrow they'd all vote Republican, because they always did it... If, some day, they might get off here and find the station riddled by a shell hole, the next day crushed to a pile of dust behind its empty windows,– then they might care... Then they might want to change things...

...

Home. Firelight, moving in the gold of the books' backs and in the silver on the tea tray. Her mother, getting up, coming to meet her. Mother, delighted, proud, patting her shoulder... Aunt Anna, there for tea. And Ruth and Rosalind, and Randolph. Randolph, all in new clothes... Randolph, growing heavy, prosperous, losing his litheness... Standing, back to the fire, the way that Uncle Caleb,–

"I've been reading your 'Judas' book all the way home," Anne said. "Of course, he's novelized it too much. War never could be one coherent romance. It's good, though,–"

"Good? That thing?" Aunt Anna snorted. "Disgusting rot, I call it!" Anne smiled.

"Have you read it, Mother?"

"Your father and I began it. He didn't like it, so we laid it down. I finished it, though, myself. I can't think that war was like that. Of course, the hero never got to the front though."

Anne sipped her tea. "Only one person in seven, ever did get there. Even if he got to the front, though, he might have,–"

"I can't believe, dear, that officers got drunk, and went around with women. The book's all about those people's love affairs,– not about war. You feel they're leading a very disagreeable life, but you don't feel the war at all. Why, you don't even know what's happening in the war,–"

"You never did," said Anne. "Till you got papers from home,–"

"But isn't it laid on a bit thick, Anne?" said Ruthy. "Jim thinks,–" She stopped. Anne, looking at her, queerly...

"What does Jim think?" Anne watched Ruth. How much *did* people know of one another when they married?

"Jim says the author wrote that part to get a kick out of it himself. He thinks the man's a rotter,–"

"Does he?" said Anne.

"But Anne, it couldn't be true of the American army." Rosalind, buttoning up her coat. The baby,– Heavens she must hurry,– "May be true of the British,– they were there longer,– got more demoralized than we did. That sort of thing couldn't possibly have happened in our army, could it?" Anne poked her lemon with the silver teaspoon. Nice to have silver teaspoons... Randolph standing, quiet, before the fire. She looked up at him. His eyes, amused, there, waiting... Lips, closing over his pipestem in a queer smile...

"What do *you* think?" said Anne. Randolph's long, slim fingers grasped his pipe's bowl. He nodded.

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"Sure it could," he said...

...

"I'll walk up with you." Anne pulled a leather coat on. Nice to be back in a world where leather coats were... She walked out into the cold dark with Randolph,– Down, across the bridge... Up, through the bare woods, toward the big house... Scuffing the dead leaves... "So, you're a business man!"

"Yes, I'm getting smugger every day," said Randolph. No use pretending with Anne... "Look at my new suit,– Tibbs Brothers, London. Look at your Uncle Caleb's gold watch chain across my stomach,– Sammy wouldn't have it,– not proletarian enough for Sammy. I'm a mill operator. I sit with my thumbs hooked in my arm holes, smiling at our great and glorious country. Rooting for 'Normalcy,' Anne,–"

"Forgotten all about the war?" She watched him in thin moonlight. Walking better... Not hurling himself at his bad leg, and cursing... Swinging his cane slow, resigned to lameness...

"War?" he said, "what war?" Bitterness in that voice... "What the Hell do I care what the boys fought for? Make the Allies pay their debts before we give 'em credit. Be strong, and make this country safe for business. Down with the Bolsheviks! I'm the father of a family now, Anne. My daughter's growing prettier every day and the next one,–"

"Good Lord," said Anne. That was why Rosalind had ridden in the limousine with Aunt Anna...

"The next one is going to be a son, Anne! I've got to make the world smug, so,–"

"He'll be just about the right age to be killed in the next war,–" said Anne.

"So I can leave my fortune to my son,–"

"Oh shut up!" Anne said.

...

Evening. Josiah snoozing there, behind his paper. Her mother, sewing, gentle, in the lamplight. Asking Anne about the towns she'd been to. Wonderful the way her mother understood things... Anne sat, back to the fire, smoking. The fire, warming her shoulder blades, and sizzling softly... Life so tranquil, quiet... It would go on like this until they all died... Sammy burst in, and dropped down on the sofa.

"Say, Anne. Who you goin' to vote for? Randolph won't tell who he is, but I know. He'll vote for Cox. He's always been a Southern Democrat. He's even trying to move the Huntington Mills down south, into the cotton belt where Labor isn't organized so they can exploit it nicely. You can imagine what a hit moving out of New England makes with Father's partners!"

"And who's Aunt Anna going to vote for?"

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"Ma? Harding, of course, like Uncle Joe here. You don't suppose any Wentworth'd ever vote Democratic, do you? Ruthy's going to vote for Cox, because Jim is. Anyway, she believes this rot about the League of Nations. Why, Anne, Cox never heard of the League of Nations, no more than Harding, till great God Wilson told him,–"

"And Ros?" said Anne.

"Oh, she forgot to register. Trust Ros. If she'd known when the time was to register, she'd have been changing the baby's pants or something."

"And who are you voting for, Sam?"

"Debs, of course. A protest against all this Red hysteria. A step toward the day when we'll have labor governments, and international mindedness and no wars,–"

"I believe," Josiah looked up mildly from his paper, "I believe that the Republicans will form some sort of Association of Nations, to prevent war. You saw the statement, Anne, signed by your cousin Thomas Emerson and others, saying that they were voting for Harding because they believed that he would join the League of Nations." He looked at Anne standing, thin and straight, back to the fire. Queer that he should have a daughter who smoked cigarettes, and cut her hair short...

"I don't know why they think so, Father. Read Harding's Des Moines speech: 'It is not interpretation,'" Anne shook an extended hand, wagging her forefinger, "'Not interpretation, but rejection I am seeking! My position is that the proposed League of Nations strikes a deadly blow at our Constitutional integrity and surrenders to a dangerous extent our independence of action...'"

"Hear! Hear!" yelled Sammy, rolling on the sofa.

"Anne," Josiah rose with quiet dignity, walked toward the door into the study. A daughter of his, gone back on all the old traditions... Those fine men, President Lowell, Henry Cabot Lodge, Taft,– "Your cousin Thomas Emerson, I suppose, knows more about what's good for the country than you do." He closed the door behind him. Anne's eyes stayed on the white door, its old, black latch. Father, believing more in people than in ideas... More in a past generation than in a new one...

"I'm going to vote for Cox, Sam," she said. "If this country elects Harding, it'll be just as though they'd had a referendum after the Civil War, and decided to go back to slavery. Or as if the north had said: 'We made Virginia stay in, now we'll get out.' Why, we've been fighting all this time for a World Government of some kind. If we elect Harding, we're just a nation of dodos."

"Of course we are!" Sammy jumped up, rumpling his hair. "Say, Anne, has it taken you all this time to find out we're a nation of dodos?"

"Well," said Anne, "day after tomorrow we'll know..."

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Anne stepped out of the polling place beside her mother. Her first vote cast... They walked toward the station. Going back to New York, to finish up things... Jerry would be there tonight... Jerry... After all, nothing much left to do now,– and Jerry, always waiting... Always ready... Perhaps, if you shut your eyes, pretended,–

"Good-bye, dear." Her mother, stopping at the corner. The white, sweet face, with its sad eyes. Could her mother have gone back on her,– and Geoffrey? She had never told whom she was going to vote for,– Would she let them down, too?

"Mother, who,–"

"I have a District Nursing Meeting, dear, or I'd walk down." Anne kissed her. Better not know... Better have something, after it was all over, to believe in...

"Good-bye. I'll be back soon..."

...

The New York train, gliding through slums, through suburbs, into open country. Rain, making slanting lines across the windows. Lines, growing more horizontal... Strange how soothing it still was to travel... 'Keep moving, Anne! Keep moving. Whatever we do in life, we can't stand still or go back. You and I, Anne,–' Jerry.

Tomorrow. Life would be once more without an Object... Causes, all vanished... The old wagon standing, with its shafts on the ground... No stars to hitch to... Today's Star, perhaps, captured... The Nation, taking its place proudly, among Nations... And then,– there would be Jerry. Have to decide that... Jerry, landing today... Coming round this evening... Anne sighed. If only you could get a little bit excited at the thought of Jerry... Good old Jerry...

...

New York, cloudy, full of people. A drag about it, the way there was on Sundays... Like a clock run down... Or some great giant, half asleep or dying... Anne's taxi bounded south toward the slum where she lived. A square, grey polling place stood at the corner, with two policemen standing at the doorway. Through the door stepped an Italian woman, stout, swarthy-faced, bareheaded. She waddled off along the dirty sidewalk. The People,– deciding... Deciding what you'd fought for... What you'd died for... Under the elevated tracks, small boys were making fires. Orange flames, licking upward... Orange light, picking out small, eager faces from the darkness...

...

A young man had called to see Anne,– the woman who kept the lodging-house looked suspicious. She always looked suspicious. You couldn't, on your salary, live anywhere in New York where they were not suspicious... Anne smiled. If the woman could only see her mother! She carried her bag upstairs. The smell of escaped gas lurked in the hallway. Grown familiar,– that smell. Squalor. Not just hardship, – you could stand that. You could live with candles, and no baths,

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and smoky stoves... That was good... That was Living... But gas lights, dirty bathrooms,– Women, who suspected,– Gosh, you'd be glad to get home... To cool houses, and open fires and silver teaspoons... 'The young man will be back at half past seven,' the woman, calling. Jerry... If only you could get a little bit excited at the thought of Jerry...

...

How homely he was... As she came downstairs, Anne watched him, standing there, tall, gawky under the flickering gas light. But such a kind face. Eyes gleaming from behind the great, thick glasses... One minute, and she would have that feeling that she must turn and run away from something,– Jerry's hand out: "Hello!" he said. Why, somehow the feeling wasn't there... Jerry's knuckly hand was there, and kindness, beaming through the thick glass... You didn't have to run away from kindness... Kindness you could live with. But passion, that thing that made the whole world tremble,– "Come on!" Jerry, dropping her hand, holding the street door open, strolling out beside her, hands deep in his pockets, rain trickling onto his face. Thinking of something else, not of her at all... An awkward silence.

"Which way?" Anne stopped. The corner...

"Oh! Why, let's dine at Mouquin's. I've got tickets to 'Liliom.' We can hear returns there."

"I hardly dare to listen to them," Anne said...

...

The darkened theatre. A Hungarian circus rider, who slapped the girls, and poked them. If Jerry were good-looking... If he, even, slapped you,– There he was, leaning on the seat's arm next her, quite lost in this play. At dinner he had been quite lost in his account of Peru. The same way, long ago, he used to be quite lost in his religion. The head in front of Anne shifted into her view. She shifted, leaning her elbow on the support next Jerry's. Her arm touched his. His, moving away... Jerry leaned on the other side of his chair. He laughed,– at the play... "Good, isn't it?" he murmured...

"Fine," said Anne...

...

Crowds, moving across the lobby. Anne, stepping, slowly. Election, going towards Harding... Harding... The dodo from Ohio... Jerry, behind, above her... 'A darn good play! That Hungarian must be a clever fellow.' Rain, pouring. Pouring. People hunting for taxis, opening umbrellas. Jerry put up Anne's umbrella, held out his elbow. She hooked her hand through. They walked out. Rain, splashing up from the sidewalks, wetting Anne's legs. Jerry's elbow, stiff, efficient, interested only in the umbrella... Her hand hung there, as it had hung from handles in the subway. Jerry, moving through the wet dark with a long stride.

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"God, what weather!"

...

Crowds standing in Times Square under wet umbrellas. Bats' wings, with lights reflected in them. Lights that flashed gold and purple, blue and crimson. High up, the name of chewing gum in lights, against the dampness. Three little men with pointed heads jumped up and down, tense, nervous. A fountain, rippling forth colored stars. On either side of it, two gorgeous peacocks. The little men, up, out, down, up, out, down,– mechanical, continuous. You knew what they would do, and waited for them to do it... Watched, with your head back...

"I guess here's as good as any place," said Jerry. They stopped. Under the umbrellas, people talking. Young men and girls together. On the Times building, a yellow-white board with figures: 'Essex County, Cox 683, Harding 2,210. Borough of Manhattan, District 4, Cox 2,977, Harding 4,231, Debs 4,054. State of Vermont goes to Harding with 64,688, Cox 20,587. Ohio returns from 1,633 out of 7,145 precincts show Harding leading by 95,087 votes...

"He'll be elected," said Jerry. "What does this outfit care about poor old Europe?" He looked up at the chewing gum figures, jumping. "What they want is to sell more chewing gum and other stuff that people don't need. You ought to get a job, Anne, selling something,– then you'll feel real enthusiasm about this old world." Anne stood, gazing at the returns on the white sheet. Her feet were cold, wet. Jerry, advising her to get a job... Jerry, bored with all this...

"Boy! Look at that!" A man behind Anne, pointing. High up a white searchlight played back and forth, lighting the raindrops... Lighting the fog above them... 'Harding el-*ect*-ed,' someone shouting, 'Harding el-*ect*-ed...' Cheers, going up, from under the umbrellas... "Say, Eddie," the man behind Anne, talking, "you and me can go back home now, and get rich." Jerry yawned and looked down from the wet sky. He rammed his hands deep down into his pockets.

"Well, that's over! We're on the road to 'Normalcy.' Come on, Anne!" She followed him. People hurrying, splashing in the wet street... People, laughing... Rows of taxis, glistening with water, moving, stopping... Crowds of wet umbrellas... People, blowing on tin horns, and laughing... Above their heads, the rippling lights of Chewing Gum, Triumphant...

"So, the whole War was just a farce," said Anne...

...

Home. Josiah, helping the taxi-man, with Anne's trunk. 'Pleased with the election, Mr. Wentworth?' 'Fine! Fine! The country can get back to work now. This way.' Their footsteps scuffling along the upper entry. Anne flung her hat on the hall table. Her mother, standing beside her, hand on her arm. Had Mother,– 'Won't have

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to discuss the war any more now,' she was saying, 'come in and see the others. They've been waiting for you...'

"I've got them to say they'll try moving one of the mills down south, Anne," Randolph was saying... Randolph's eyes flashing, almost the way they used to...

"And after the baby comes, we may move down there." Rosalind smiling, happy...

"Anne, I'm going to be married at New Year's! Jim's going to take me to France! Won't that be great, Anne?" Ruthy, excited... Anne sat down. Everyone happy. Everyone cheerful about something. Everyone delighted not to have to think any more about Great Causes... To be able, now, to think about Their Own Things... Anne pushed her hair back. Why should she think about the poor world? Why should *she* care? *She* didn't have any children to fight the next war...

"Here's a letter for you, dear. From Jerry." Her mother tossed the letter into her lap. The others, all getting up to go... Buttoning their coats...

"You'd better marry Jerry, Anne!" laughed Randolph. "Give up your visions. It's the only way out!" Anne shook her head.

"Why should I marry?" she said.

...

Still,– Why not? Life would be empty,– She stood, looking at the letter. Postmarked at some town in Connecticut, that she'd never heard of... Where was Jerry? He'd said good night on the rainy sidewalk outside her lodging-house that evening after the election. Yawned over good night. Since then, she had not seen him. Not like Jerry... Jerry had always sort of been there, waiting... Always in the background, to fall back on... She tore the letter open. 'I want you to be among the first to know, Anne...' Jerry engaged... Met the girl on the steamer coming home... Wanted Anne to know her,– sure she'd like her... Had wanted to tell her about it the other evening, but thought he ought to wait till he'd seen Ethel's family...

Anne stuck the letter in her pocket. So, he was gone,– too... Jerry, who had been going to go through life a celibate, unless she,– A joke, this... A joke on her... Well, she didn't care... She didn't love him. Lucky she didn't love him... Good old Jerry...

Life, to begin again... Life,– a glass of champagne, a plate of soup, and now, the soup grown cold...

'Dinner'll be ready in ten minutes, dear.' Her mother's voice. Anne got up, strolled toward the old, red curtains, out to the stairs... The third step would squeak... The bathroom, up there, shining, waiting... Clean towels... A hot bath... A lifetime of,–

"Yes, dinner,–" Anne said...

FINIS

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